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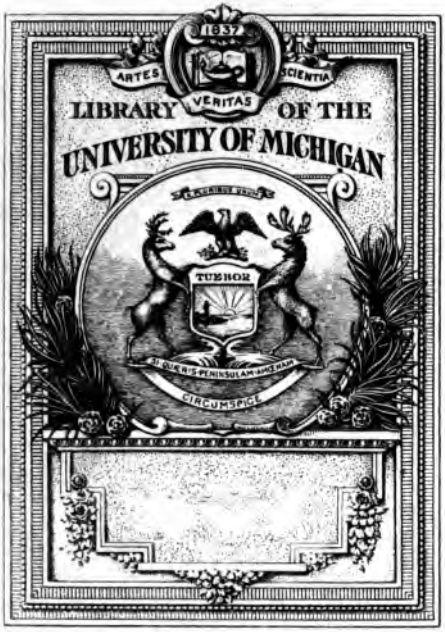
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THE SPINNIE.

"A board laid over the top of the wheelbarrow, served as the table; our dining-room was a roothouse lined with moss and ivy."

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THE LIFE AND WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER,

BY

ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ. LL.D.

VOL. IV.

THE PEASANT'S NEST.

London:
BALDWIN & CRADOCK, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1838.

[illegible]

"A board laid over the top of the [illegible], served us for a table; our dining-room was a roothouse lined with [illegible] and ivy."

UNIV. OF MICH.

THE

WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.

COMPRISING

HIS POEMS,

CORRESPONDENCE, AND TRANSLATIONS.

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THE EDITOR,

ROBERT SOUTHEY, Esq. LL. D.

POET LAUREATE, ETC.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:
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1836.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

SOME progress had been made in printing the present Volume, when the Editor was favoured by the Executors of the late Mrs. Smith with the collection of Cowper's letters, which had descended to that lady, as Mr. Newton's niece; an obligation for which he is principally indebted to the kindness of Mr. Bull. The originals have been carefully collated with the printed copies in Hayley's work, and in the (so called) Private Correspondence. Several letters from this collection will now be published for the first time; in many others passages are restored which

there was no longer any motive for suppressing. Frequently it was found that one part of a letter had been published by Hayley, and another by Dr. J. Johnson; and that Hayley had put together parts from different letters. These disjointed fragments are now assorted and reunited, the connecting paragraphs replaced, and the letters presented as they were written. The cause therefore which has delayed the present volume in the press has very materially enhanced its value.

Mr. Newton's collection contains many of his own letters to Cowper and to Mrs. Unwin, and of Mrs. Unwin and her son to him. From these and other documents, which have reached the Editor during his progress, some particulars have come to his knowledge which should have been stated in the Life of Cowper, had he been acquainted with them in time; and some letters have appeared which should have been inserted

there: but where no diligence has been wanting, no apology can be needed for unavoidable defects. The most convenient manner in which such defects can now be supplied, will be by introducing these materials in the Life of Mr. Newton, and in brief Memoirs of other persons more or less intimately connected with Cowper; and for this a supplementary volume will be required.

KESWICK, May 5, 1836.

May 14.

WHILE this Advertisement was in the press, the writer has received an additional proof of the interest with which the nearest friends and relations of Cowper regard this careful and faithful collection of his works. The Publishers have transmitted to him the following sanction, and which they are authorised to give publicity to, in any and in all ways that they may think most serviceable to their Edition.

As Administratrix to my cousin, William Cowper, Esq. of Olney, and afterwards of Weston-Underwood, I freely authorise Messrs. Baldwin and Cradock to publish any of his Letters which may come into their possession, so far as their publication shall be sanctioned and approved by Robert Southey, Esq. the Editor of this Edition of Cowper's Works.

Signed ANNE BODHAM,

May 10, 1836.

For Messrs. Baldwin and Cradock.

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THE

LETTERS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 28, 1780.

I HAVE heard nothing more from Mr. Newton upon the subject you mention; but I dare say that, having been given to expect the benefit of your nomination in behalf of his nephew, he still depends upon it. His obligations to Mr. Thornton have been so numerous, and so weighty, that though he has, in a few instances, prevailed upon himself to recommend an object now and then to his patronage, he has very sparingly, if at all, exerted his interest with him in behalf of his own relations. The best way to reconcile yourself to this application of your bounty, will be to consider that your principal and main intention in it is to oblige your mother. As to the boy—

"To whom related, or by whom begot,"

is a very unimportant part of the subject.

With respect to the advice you are required to give to a young lady, that she may be properly instructed

in the manner of keeping the sabbath, you are so well qualified for the task yourself, that it is impossible you should need any assistance; at least it is hardly possible that I should afford you any, who consider myself as no longer interested in the question. As you desire it, however, and I am not willing to refuse you the little that is in my power, I just subjoin a few hints that have occurred to me upon the occasion; not because I think you want them, but because it would seem unkind to withhold them. The sabbath then, I think, may be considered, first, as a commandment, no less binding upon modern Christians than upon ancient Jews; because the spiritual people amongst them did not think it enough to abstain from manual occupations upon that day, but, entering more deeply into the meaning of the precept, allotted those hours they took from the world to the cultivation of holiness in their own souls,—which ever was, and ever will be, a duty incumbent upon all who ever heard of a sabbath, and is of perpetual obligation both upon Jews and Christians; (the commandment, therefore, enjoins it; the prophets have also enforced it; and in many instances, both scriptural and modern, the breach of it has been punished with a providential and judicial severity that may make by-standers tremble): secondly, as a privilege, which you well know how to dilate upon, better than I can tell you: thirdly, as a sign of that covenant by which believers are entitled to a rest that yet remaineth: fourthly, as the *sine quâ non* of the Christian character; and upon this head I should guard against being misunderstood to mean no more than two attendances upon public worship, which is a form

complied with by thousands who never kept a sabbath in their lives. Consistency is necessary, to give substance and solidity to the whole. To sanctify the day at church, and to trifle it away out of church, is profanation, and vitiates all. After all, I could ask my catechumen one short question—"Do you love the day, or do you not? If you love it, you will never inquire how far you may safely deprive yourself of the enjoyment of it. If you do not love it, and you find yourself obliged in conscience to acknowledge it, that is an alarming symptom, and ought to make you tremble. If you do not love it, then it is a weariness to you, and you wish it was over. The ideas of labour and rest are not more opposite to each other than the idea of a sabbath, and that dislike and disgust with which it fills the souls of thousands to be obliged to keep it. It is worse than bodily labour, more fatiguing than the drudgery of an ass."

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 6, 1780.

I NEVER was, any more than yourself, a friend to pluralities; they are generally found in the hands of the avaricious, whose insatiable hunger after preferment proves them unworthy of any at all. They attend much to the regular payment of their dues, but not at all to the spiritual interests of their parishioners. Having forgot their duty, or never known it, they differ in nothing from the laity, except their outward garb, and their exclusive right to the desk and pulpit.

But when pluralities seek the man, instead of being sought by him; and when the man is honest, conscientious, and pious; careful to employ a substitute in those respects like himself; and, not contented with this, will see with his own eyes that the concerns of his parishes are decently and diligently administered; in that case, considering the present dearth of such characters in the ministry, I think it an event advantageous to the people, and much to be desired by all who regret the great and apparent want of sobriety and earnestness among the clergy. A man who does not seek a living merely as a pecuniary emolument, has no need, in my judgement, to refuse one because it is so. He means to do his duty, and by doing it he earns his wages. The two Ramsdens being contiguous to each other, and falling easily under the care of one pastor, and both so near to Stock that you can visit them without difficulty, as often as you please, I see no reasonable objection, nor does your mother. As to the wry-mouthed sneers and illiberal misconstructions of the censorious, I know no better shield to guard you against them, than what you are already furnished with,—a clear and unoffended conscience.

The salmon came safe and punctual to its assignation; it served us for two dinners and six suppers, was remarkably fresh and fine. Item, the lobster.

I am obliged to you for what you said upon the subject of book-buying, and am very fond of availing myself of another man's pocket, when I can do it creditably to myself, and without injury to him. Amusements are necessary, in a retirement like mine, especially in such a state of mind as I labour under.

The necessity of amusement makes me sometimes write verses; it made me a carpenter, a birdcage maker, a gardener; and has lately taught me to draw, and to draw too with such surprising proficiency in the art, considering my total ignorance of it two months ago, that when I show your mother my productions, she is all admiration and applause.

You need never fear the communication of what you entrust to us in confidence. You know your mother's delicacy in this point sufficiently; and as for me, I once wrote a Connoisseur upon the subject of secret-keeping, and from that day to this I believe I have never divulged one.

We were much pleased with Mr. Newton's application to you for a charity sermon, and with what he said upon that subject in his last letter, "that he was glad of an opportunity to give you that proof of his regard."

Believe me yours, with the customary, but not therefore unmeaning addition of love to all under your roof. Your mother sends hers, which being maternal, is put up in a separate parcel.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, April 16, 1780.

SINCE I wrote my last we have had a visit from ———. I did not feel myself vehemently disposed to receive him with that complaisance, from which a stranger generally infers that he is welcome. By his manner, which was rather bold than easy, I judged

that there was no occasion for it, and that it was a trifle which, if he did not meet with, neither would he feel the want of. He has the air of a travelled man, but not of a travelled gentleman; is quite delivered from that reserve which is so common an ingredient in the English character, yet does not open himself gently and gradually, as men of polite behaviour do, but bursts upon you all at once. He talks very loud, and when our poor little robins hear a great noise, they are immediately seized with an ambition to surpass it; the increase of their vociferation occasioned an increase of his, and his in return acted as a stimulus upon theirs; neither side entertained a thought of giving up the contest, which became continually more interesting to our ears, during the whole visit. The birds, however, survived it, and so did we. They perhaps flatter themselves they gained a complete victory, but I believe Mr. ——— could have killed them both in another hour.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

DEAR SIR, May 3, 1780.

You indulge me in such a variety of subjects, and allow me such a latitude of excursion in this scribbling employment, that I have no excuse for silence. I am much obliged to you for swallowing such boluses as I send you, for the sake of my gilding, and verily believe that I am the only man alive, from whom they would be welcome to a palate like yours. I wish I could make them more splendid than they are, more

alluring to the eye, at least, if not more pleasing to the taste; but my leaf gold is tarnished, and has received such a tinge from the vapours that are ever brooding over my mind, that I think it no small proof of your partiality to me, that you will read my letters. I am not fond of longwinded metaphors; I have always observed, that they halt at the latter end of their progress, and so do mine. I deal much in ink indeed, but not such ink as is employed by poets, and writers of essays. Mine is a harmless fluid, and guilty of no deceptions but such as may prevail without the least injury to the person imposed on. I draw mountains, valleys, woods, and streams, and ducks, and dab-chicks. I admire them myself, and Mrs. Unwin admires them; and her praise, and my praise put together, are fame enough for me. O! I could spend whole days and moonlight nights in feeding upon a lovely prospect! My eyes drink the rivers as they flow. If every human being upon earth could think for one quarter of an hour as I have done for many years, there might perhaps be many miserable men among them, but not an unawakened one could be found from the arctic to the antarctic circle. At present, the difference between them and me is greatly to their advantage. I delight in baubles, and know them to be so; for rested in, and viewed without a reference to their Author, what is the earth,—what are the planets,—what is the sun itself but a bauble? Better for a man never to have seen them, or to see them with the eyes of a brute, stupid and unconscious of what he beholds, than not to be able to say, "The Maker of all these wonders is my friend!" Their

eyes have never been opened, to see that they are trifles; mine have been, and will be till they are closed for ever. They think a fine estate, a large conservatory, a hothouse rich as a West Indian garden, things of consequence; visit them with pleasure, and muse upon them with ten times more. I am pleased with a frame of four lights, doubtful whether the few pines it contains will ever be worth a farthing; amuse myself with a greenhouse which Lord Bute's gardener could take upon his back, and walk away with; and when I have paid it the accustomed visit, and watered it, and given it air, I say to myself—"This is not mine, it is a plaything lent me for the present; I must leave it soon."

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Olney, May 6, 1780.

I AM much obliged to you for your speedy answer to my queries. I know less of the law than a country attorney, yet sometimes I think I have almost as much business. My former connexion with the profession has got wind; and though I earnestly profess, and protest, and proclaim it abroad that I know nothing of the matter, they cannot be persuaded to believe, that a head once endued with a legal periwig can ever be deficient in those natural endowments it is supposed to cover. I have had the good fortune to be once or twice in the right, which, added to the cheapness of a gratuitous counsel, has advanced my credit to a degree I never expected to attain in the capacity of a

lawyer. Indeed, if two of the wisest in the science of jurisprudence may give opposite opinions on the same point, which does not unfrequently happen, it seems to be a matter of indifference whether a man answers by rule or at a venture. He that stumbles upon the right side of the question is just as useful to his client as he that arrives at the same end by regular approaches, and is conducted to the mark he aims at by the greatest authorities.

* * * * *

These violent attacks of a distemper so often fatal, are very alarming to all who esteem and respect the Chancellor as he deserves. A life of confinement, and of anxious attention to important objects, where the habit is bilious to such a terrible degree, threatens to be but a short one; and I wish he may not be made a text for men of reflection to moralize upon, affording a conspicuous instance of the transient and fading nature of all human accomplishments and attainments.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 8, 1780.

My scribbling humour has of late been entirely absorbed in the passion for landscape drawing. It is a most amusing art, and like every other art, requires much practice and attention.

Nil sine multo
Vita labore dedit mortalibus.

Excellence is providentially placed beyond the reach of indolence, that success may be the reward of industry, and that idleness may be punished with obscurity and disgrace. So long as I am pleased with an employment, I am capable of unwearied application, because my feelings are all of the intense kind. I never received a *little* pleasure from any thing in my life; if I am delighted, it is in the extreme. The unhappy consequence of this temperature is, that my attachment to any occupation seldom outlives the novelty of it. That nerve of my imagination that feels the touch of any particular amusement, twangs under the energy of the pressure with so much vehemence, that it soon becomes sensible of weariness and fatigue. Hence I draw an unfavourable prognostic, and expect that I shall shortly be constrained to look out for something else. Then perhaps I may string the lyre again, and be able to comply with your demand.

Now for the visit you propose to pay us, and propose *not* to pay us; the hope of which plays about upon your paper, like a jack-o-lantern upon the ceiling. This is no mean simile, for Virgil (you remember) uses it. It is here, it is there, it vanishes, it returns, it dazzles you, a cloud interposes, and it is gone. However just the comparison, I hope you will contrive to spoil it, and that your final determination will be to come. As to the masons you expect, bring them with you;—bring brick, bring mortar, bring every thing that would oppose itself to your journey;—all shall be welcome. I have a greenhouse that is too small, come and enlarge it; build me a pinery; repair the garden

wall, that has great need of your assistance; do any thing; you cannot do too much; so far from thinking you and your train troublesome, we shall rejoice to see you, upon these or upon any other terms you can propose. But to be serious,—you will do well to consider that a long summer is before you; that the party will not have such another opportunity to meet this great while; that you may finish your masonry long enough before winter, though you should not begin this month, but that you cannot always find your brother and sister Powley at Olney. These, and some other considerations, such as the desire we have to see you, and the pleasure we expect from seeing you all together, may, and, I think, ought to overcome your scruples.

From a general recollection of Lord Clarendon's History of the Rebellion, I thought (and I remember I told you so) that there was a striking resemblance between that period and the present. But I am now reading, and have read three volumes of Hume's History, one of which is engrossed entirely by that subject. There I see reason to alter my opinion, and the seeming resemblance has disappeared upon a more particular information. Charles succeeded to a long train of arbitrary princes, whose subjects had tamely acquiesced in the despotism of their masters, till their privileges were all forgot. He did but tread in their steps, and exemplify the principles in which he had been brought up, when he oppressed his people. But just at that time, unhappily for the monarch, the subject began to see, and to see that he had a right to property and freedom. This marks a sufficient difference between the disputes of that day and the present.

But there was another main cause of that rebellion, which at this time does not operate at all. The king was devoted to the hierarchy; his subjects were puritans and would not bear it. Every circumstance of ecclesiastical order and discipline was an abomination to them, and in his esteem an indispensable duty. And though at last he was obliged to give up many things, he would not abolish episcopacy; and till that were done his concessions could have no conciliating effect. These two concurring causes were indeed sufficient to set three kingdoms in a flame. But they subsist not now, nor any other, I hope, notwithstanding the bustle made by the patriots, equal to the production of such terrible events.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, May 10, 1780.

I DO not write to comfort you; that office is not likely to be well performed by one who has no comfort for himself; nor to comply with an impertinent ceremony, which in general might well be spared upon such occasions; but because I would not seem indifferent to the concerns of those I have so much reason to esteem and love. If I did not sorrow for your brother's death, I should expect that nobody would for mine; when I knew him, he was much beloved, and I doubt not continued to be so. To live and die together is the lot of a few happy families, who hardly know what a separation means, and one sepulchre serves them all; but the ashes of our kindred are dispersed

indeed. Whether the American gulf has swallowed up any other of my relations, I know not; it has made many mourners.

Believe me, my dear cousin, though after a long silence, which perhaps nothing less than the present concern could have prevailed with me to interrupt, as much as ever,

Your affectionate kinsman,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 10, 1780.

If authors could have lived to adjust and authenticate their own text, a commentator would have been an useless creature. For instance—if Dr. Bentley had found, or opined that he had found, the word *tube*, where it seemed to present itself to you, and had judged the subject worthy of his critical acumen, he would either have justified the corrupt reading, or have substituted some invention of his own, in defence of which he would have exerted all his polemical abilities, and have quarrelled with half the literati in Europe. Then suppose the writer himself, as in the present case, to interpose with a gentle whisper thus—"If you look again, Doctor, you will perceive that what appears to you to be *tube*, is neither more nor less than the simple monosyllable *ink*, but I wrote it in great haste, and the want of sufficient precision in the character has occasioned your mistake: *you* will be especially satisfied when you see the sense[1] elucidated

[1] The passage alluded to seems to be in his letter of May 3, p. 7.

by the explanation."—But I question whether the doctor would quit his ground, or allow any author to be a competent judge in his own case. The world, however, would acquiesce immediately, and vote the critic useless.

James Andrews, who is my Michael Angelo, pays me many compliments on my success in the art of drawing, but I have not yet the vanity to think myself qualified to furnish your apartment. If I should ever attain to the degree of self-opinion requisite to such an undertaking, I shall labour at it with pleasure. I can only say, though I hope not with the affected modesty of the above-mentioned Dr. Bentley, who said the same thing,

Me quoque dicunt
Vatem pastores. Sed non Ego credulus illis.

A crow, rook, or raven, has built a nest in one of the young elm trees, at the side of Mrs. Aspray's orchard. In the violent storm that blew yesterday morning, I saw it agitated to a degree that seemed to threaten its immediate destruction, and versified the following thoughts upon the occasion [1].

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 8, 1780.

It is possible I might have indulged myself in the pleasure of writing to you, without waiting for a letter from you, but for a reason which you will not easily guess. Your mother communicated to me the satisfaction you expressed in my correspondence, that you

[1] *Cowper's* Fable of the Raven concluded this letter.

thought me entertaining and clever, and so forth:—now you must know, I love praise dearly, especially from the judicious, and those who have so much delicacy themselves as not to offend mine in giving it. But then, I found this consequence attending, or likely to attend the eulogium you bestowed;—if my friend thought me witty before, he shall think me ten times more witty hereafter;—where I joked once, I will joke five times, and for one sensible remark I will send him a dozen. Now this foolish vanity would have spoiled me quite, and would have made me as disgusting a letter-writer as Pope, who seems to have thought that unless a sentence was well turned, and every period pointed with some conceit, it was not worth the carriage. Accordingly he is to me, except in very few instances, the most disagreeable maker of epistles that ever I met with. I was willing, therefore, to wait till the impression your commendation had made upon the foolish part of me was worn off, that I might scribble away as usual, and write my uppermost thoughts, and those only.

You are better skilled in ecclesiastical law than I am. Mrs. Powley desires me to inform her, whether a parson can be obliged to take an apprentice. For some of her husband's opposers at Dewsbury threaten to clap one upon him. Now I think it would be rather hard, if clergymen, who are not allowed to exercise any handicraft whatever, should be subject to such an imposition. If Mr. Powley was a cordwainer, or a breeches-maker, all the week, and a preacher only on Sundays, it would seem reasonable enough, in that case, that he should take an apprentice, if he chose it. But even then, in my poor judgement, he ought to be

left to his option. If they mean by an apprentice, a pupil, whom they will oblige him to hew into a parson, and after chipping away the block that hides the minister within, to qualify him to stand erect in a pulpit,—that indeed is another consideration.—But still, we live in a free country, and I cannot bring myself even to suspect that an English divine can possibly be liable to such compulsion. Ask your uncle, however; for he is wiser in these things than either of us.

I thank you for your two inscriptions, and like the last the best; the thought is just and fine, but the two last lines are sadly damaged by the monkish jingle of *peperit* and *reperit*. I have not yet translated them, nor do I promise to do it, though at some idle hour perhaps I may. In return, I send you a translation of a simile in the Paradise Lost. Not having that poem at hand, I cannot refer you to the book and page, but you may hunt for it, if you think it worth your while. It begins—

> "So when, from mountain tops, the dusky clouds
> Ascending[1]," &c.

> Quales aërii montis de vertice nubes
> Cum surgunt, et jam Boreæ tumida ora quiêrunt,
> Cælum hilares abdit, spissâ caligine, vultus:
> Tùm si jucundo tandem sol prodeat ore,
> Et croceo montes et pascua lumine tingat,
> Gaudent omnia, aves mulcent concentibus agros,
> Balatuque ovium colles, vallesque resultant.

If you spy any fault in my Latin, tell me, for I am sometimes in doubt; but, as I told you when you was here, I have not a Latin book in the world to consult, or correct a mistake by; and some years have passed *since I was* a schoolboy.

An English Versification of a Thought that popped into my Head about two Months since.

Sweet stream! that winds through yonder glade—
Apt emblem of a virtuous maid!—
Silent, and chaste, she steals along,
Far from the world's gay, busy throng;
With gentle, yet prevailing force,
Intent upon her destin'd course:
Graceful, and useful, all she does,
Blessing, and bless'd, where'er she goes:
Pure-bosom'd, as that watery glass,
And Heaven reflected in her face!

Now this is not so exclusively applicable to a maiden, as to be the sole property of your sister Shuttleworth. If you look at Mrs. Unwin, you will see that she has not lost her right to this just praise by marrying you.

Your mother sends her love to all, and mine comes jogging along by the side of it. Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

DEAR SIR, June 12, 1780.

We accept it as an effort of your friendship, that you could prevail with yourself, in a time of such terror and distress, to send us repeated accounts of yours and Mrs. Newton's welfare; you supposed, with reason enough, that we should be apprehensive for your safety, situated as you were, apparently, within the reach of so much danger. We rejoice that you have escaped it all, and that, except the anxiety which you must have felt, both for yourselves and others, you have

suffered nothing upon this dreadful occasion. A metropolis in flames, and a nation in ruins, are subjects of contemplation for such a mind as yours that will leave a lasting impression behind them. It is well that the design died in the execution, and will be buried, I hope never to rise again, in the ashes of its own combustion. There is a melancholy pleasure in looking back upon such a scene, arising from a comparison of possibilities with facts; the enormous bulk of the intended mischief with the abortive and partial accomplishment of it. Much was done, more indeed than could have been supposed practicable in a well-regulated city, not unfurnished with a military force for its protection. But surprise and astonishment seem at first to have struck every nerve of the police with a palsy, and to have disarmed government of all its powers.

I congratulate you upon the wisdom that withheld you from entering yourself a member of the Protestant association. Your friends who did so have reason enough to regret their doing it, even though they should never be called upon. Innocent as they are, and they who know them cannot doubt of their being perfectly so, it is likely to bring an odium on the profession they make, that will not soon be forgotten. Neither is it possible for a quiet, inoffensive man, to discover, on a sudden, that his zeal has carried him into such company, without being to the last degree shocked at his imprudence. *Their* religion was an honourable mantle, like that of Elijah; but the majority wore cloaks of Guy Fawkes's time, and meant *nothing* so little as what they pretended.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

REVEREND AND DEAR WILLIAM, June 18, 1780.

THE affairs of kingdoms, and the concerns of individuals, are variegated alike with the chequer-work of joy and sorrow. The news of a great acquisition in America has succeeded to terrible tumults in London; and the beams of prosperity are now playing upon the smoke of that conflagration which so lately terrified the whole land. These sudden changes, which are matter of every man's observation, and may therefore always be reasonably expected, serve to hold up the chin of despondency above water, and preserve mankind in general from the sin and misery of accounting existence a burden not to be endured;—an evil we should be sure to encounter, if we were not warranted to look for a bright reverse of our most afflictive experiences.

We are obliged to you for your early communication of the surrender of Charles Town, and rejoice with you in an event, which, if my political spectacles do not deceive me, is likely to bring the rebellion to a speedy end. The Spaniards were sick of the war at the very commencement of it; and I hope that, by this time, the French themselves begin to find themselves a little indisposed, if not desirous of peace, which that restless and meddling temper of theirs is incapable of desiring for its own sake. But is it true, that this detestable plot was an egg laid in France and hatched in London, under the influence of French corruption?—*Nam te scire, deos quoniam propiùs contingis, oportet.* The offspring has the features of such a parent; and yet, without the clearest proof of

the fact, I would not willingly charge upon a civilized nation what perhaps the most barbarous would abhor the thought of. I no sooner saw the surmise however in the paper, than I immediately began to write Latin verses upon the occasion. "An odd effect," you will say, "of such a circumstance:"—but an effect, nevertheless, that whatever has, at any time, moved my passions whether pleasantly or otherwise, has always had upon me: were I to express what I feel upon such occasions in prose, it would be verbose, inflated, and disgusting. I therefore have recourse to verse, as a suitable vehicle for the most vehement expressions my thoughts suggest to me. What I have written, I did not write so much for the comfort of the English, as for the mortification of the French. You will immediately perceive, therefore, that I have been labouring in vain, and that this bouncing explosion is likely to spend itself in the air. For I have no means of circulating what follows through all the French territories; and unless that, or something like it, can be done, my indignation will be entirely fruitless. Tell me how I can convey it into Sartine's pocket, or who will lay it upon his desk for me. But read it first, and unless you think it pointed enough to sting the Gaul to the quick, burn it.

In seditionem horrendam, corruptelis Gallicis, ut fertur, Londini nuper exortam.

Perfida, crudelis, victa et lymphata furore,
Non armis, laurum Gallia fraude petit.
Venalem pretio plebem conducit, et urit
Undique privatas patriciasque domos.

Nequicquàm conata suà, fœdissima sperat
Posse tamen nostrâ nos superare manu.
Gallia, vana struis! Precibus nunc utere! Vinces,
Nam mites timidis, supplicibusque sumus.

I have lately exercised my ingenuity in contriving an exercise for yours, and have composed a riddle, which, if it does not make you laugh before you have solved it, will probably do it afterwards. I would transcribe it now, but am really so fatigued with writing, that unless I knew you had a quinsy, and that a fit of laughter might possibly save your life, I could not prevail with myself to do it.

What could you possibly mean, slender as you are, by sallying out upon your two-walking-sticks at two in the morning, into the midst of such a tumult? We admire your prowess, but cannot commend your prudence.

Our love attends you all, collectively and individually. Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 22, 1780.

A WORD or two in answer to two or three questions of yours, which I have hitherto taken no notice of. I am not in a scribbling mood, and shall therefore make no excursions to amuse either myself or you. The needful will be as much as I can manage at present; the playful must wait for another opportunity.

I thank you for your offer of Robertson; but I have more reading upon my hands at this present writing

than I shall get rid of in a twelvemonth:—and this moment recollect that I have seen it already. He is an author that I admire much, with one exception, that I think his style is too laboured. Hume, as an historian, pleases me more.

I have read just enough of the *Biographia Britannica*, to say, that I have tasted it, and have no doubt but I shall like it. I am pretty much in the garden at this season of the year, so read but little. In summer-time I am as giddy-headed as a boy, and can settle to nothing. Winter condenses me, and makes me lumpish and sober; and then I can read all day long.

For the same reasons, I have no need of the landscapes at present; when I want them I will renew my application, and repeat the description, but it will hardly be before October.

I congratulate you upon a duplicate of Ramsden's. As your charge is become twofold, may your satisfaction be so too. Mine is sure to be doubled, because you have promised me a present of salmon.

Before I arose this morning, I composed the three following stanzas; I send them because I like them pretty well myself; and if you should not, you must accept this handsome compliment as an amends for their deficiencies. You may print the lines, if you judge them worth it[1].

I have only time to add love, &c., and my two initials.

W. C.

[1] Verses on the burning of Lord Mansfield's library, &c.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 23, 1780.

YOUR reflections upon the state of London, the sins and enormities of that great city, while you had a distant view of it from Greenwich, seem to have been prophetic of the heavy stroke that fell upon it just after. Man often prophesies without knowing it; a spirit speaks by him which is not his own, though he does not at that time suspect that he is under the influence of any other. Did he foresee what is always foreseen by Him who dictates what he supposes to be his own, he would suffer by anticipation, as well as by consequence; and wish perhaps as ardently for the happy ignorance, to which he is at present so much indebted, as some have foolishly and inconsiderately done for a knowledge that would be but another name for misery.

And why have I said all this? especially to you, who have hitherto said it to me:—not because I had the least desire of informing a wiser man than myself, but because the observation was naturally suggested by the recollection of your letter, and that letter, though not the last, happened to be uppermost in my mind. I can compare this mind of mine to nothing that resembles it more, than to a board that is under the carpenter's plane, (I mean while I am writing to you,) the shavings are my uppermost thoughts; after a few strokes of the tool, it acquires a new surface: this again, upon a repetition of his task, he takes off, and a new surface still succeeds: whether the shavings of the present day will be worth your acceptance, I know

not; I am unfortunately made neither of cedar nor of mahogany, but *Truncus ficulnus, inutile lignum;* consequently, though I should be planed till I am as thin as a wafer, it will be but rubbish to the last.

It is not strange that you should be the subject of a false report; for the sword of slander, like that of war, devours one as well as another; and a blameless character is particularly delicious to its unsparing appetite. But that you should be the object of such a report, you who meddle less with the designs of government than almost any man that lives under it, this is strange indeed. It is well, however, when they who account it good sport to traduce the reputation of another, invent a story that refutes itself. I wonder they do not always endeavour to accommodate their fiction to the real character of the person; their tale would then at least have an air of probability, and it might cost a peaceable good man much more trouble to disprove it. But perhaps it would not be easy to discern what part of your conduct lies more open to such an attempt than another; or what it is that you either say or do, at any time, that presents a fair opportunity to the most ingenious slanderer, to slip in a falsehood between your words, or actions, that shall seem to be of a piece with either. You hate compliment, I know; but by your leave this is not one—it is a truth:—worse and worse! now I have praised you indeed—well, you must thank yourself for it; it was absolutely done without the least intention on my part, and proceeded from a pen that, as far as I can remember, was never guilty of flattery since I knew how to hold it. He that slanders me, paints me blacker than

I am, and he that flatters me, whiter—they both daub me; and when I look in the glass of conscience, I see myself disguised by both: I had as lief my tailor should sew gingerbread-nuts on my coat instead of buttons, as that any man should call my Bristol stone a diamond. The tailor's trick would not at all embellish my suit, nor the flatterers make me at all the richer. I never make a present to my friend, of what I dislike myself. Ergo, (I have reached the conclusion at last,) I did not mean to flatter you.

We have sent a petition to Lord Dartmouth, by this post, praying him to interfere in parliament in behalf of the poor lace-makers. I say we, because I have signed it; Mr. G. drew it up, Mr. ——— did not think it grammatical, therefore he would not sign it. Yet I think Priscian himself would have pardoned the manner for the sake of the matter. I dare say if his lordship does not comply with the prayer of it, it will not be because he thinks it of more consequence to write grammatically, than that the poor should eat, but for some better reason.

My love to all under your roof.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

July 2, 1780.

CARISSIME, I am glad of your confidence, and have reason to hope I shall never abuse it. If you trust me with a secret, I am hermetically sealed; and if you call for the exercise of my judgement, such as it is, I

am never freakish or wanton in the use of it, much less mischievous and malignant. Critics, I believe, do not often stand so clear of these vices as I do. I like your epitaph, except that I doubt the propriety of the word *immaturus;* which, I think, is rather applicable to fruits than flowers; and except the last pentameter, the assertion it contains being rather too obvious a thought to finish with: not that I think an epitaph should be pointed like an epigram. But still there is a closeness of thought and expression necessary in the conclusion of all these little things, that they may leave an agreeable flavour upon the palate. Whatever is short, should be nervous, masculine, and compact. Little men are so; and little poems should be so; because, where the work is short, the author has no right to the plea of weariness; and laziness is never admitted as an available excuse in any thing. Now you know my opinion, you will very likely improve upon my improvement, and alter my alterations for the better. To touch and retouch is, though some writers boast of negligence, and others would be ashamed to show their foul copies, the secret of almost all good writing, especially in verse. I am never weary of it myself; and if you would take as much pains as I do, you would have no need to ask for my corrections.

Hic sepultus est
Inter suorum lacrymas
GULIELMUS NORTHCOT,
GULIELMI *et* MARIÆ *filius*
Unicus, unicè dilectus,
Qui floris ritu succisus est semihiantis,
Aprilis die septimo,
1780, *Æt.* 10.

Care, vale! Sed non æternùm, care, valeto!
Namque iterùm tecum, sim modò dignus ero:
Tum nihil amplexus poterit divellere nostros,
Nec tu marcesces, nec lacrymabor ego.

Having an English translation of it by me, I send it, though it may be of no use.

Farewell! "but not for ever," Hope replies,
"Trace but his steps, and meet him in the skies!"
There nothing shall renew our parting pain,
Thou shalt not wither, nor I weep again!

The stanzas that I sent you are maiden ones, having never been seen by any eye but your mother's and your own.

If you send me franks, I shall write longer letters—*Valete, sicut et nos valemus! Amate, sicut et nos amamus.*

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MON AMI, July 8, 1780.

If you ever take the tip of the Chancellor's ear between your finger and thumb, you can hardly improve the opportunity to better purpose, than if you should whisper into it the voice of compassion and lenity to the lace-makers. I am an eye-witness of their poverty, and do know that hundreds in this little town are upon the point of starving, and that the most unremitting industry is but barely sufficient to keep them from it. I know that the bill by which they would have been so fatally affected is thrown out: but Lord Stormont threatens them with another; and if another like it

should pass, they are undone. We lately sent a petition from hence to Lord Dartmouth; I signed it, and am sure the contents are true. The purport of it was to inform him that there are very near one thousand two hundred lace-makers in this beggarly town, the most of whom had reason enough, while the bill was in agitation, to look upon every loaf they bought as the last they should ever be able to earn. I can never think it good policy to incur the certain inconvenience of ruining thirty thousand, in order to prevent a remote and possible damage though to a much greater number. The measure is like a scythe, and the poor lace-makers are the sickly crop that trembles before the edge of it. The prospect of peace with America is like the streak of dawn in their horizon; but this bill is like a black cloud behind it, that threatens their hope of a comfortable day with utter extinction.

I did not perceive till this moment, that I had tacked two similes together; a practice which, though warranted by the example of Homer, and allowable in an epic poem, is rather luxuriant and licentious in a letter: lest I should add another, I conclude.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

July 11, 1780.

I HAVE no oracular responses to make you upon the subject of gardening, while I know that you have both Miller and Mawe in your possession; to them I refer you, but especially to the latter, because it will be little or no trouble to consult him. I have heard that

if the first crop of roses are cut off as fast as the buds appear, a second will be produced in autumn. I do not know it to be true; but the fact is easily ascertained, and I recommend it to Miss Shuttleworth to make the experiment with her scissors.

I account myself sufficiently commended for my Latin exercise, by the number of translations it has undergone. That which you distinguished in the margin by the word "better," was the production of a friend; and, except that for a modest reason he omitted the third couplet, I think it is a good one. To finish the group, I have translated it myself; and though I would not wish you to give it to the world, for more reasons than one, especially lest some French hero should call me to an account for it,—I add it on the other side. An author ought to be the best judge of his own meaning; and, whether I have succeeded or not, I cannot but wish, that where a translator is wanted, the writer was always to be his own.

False, cruel, disappointed, stung to the heart,
France quits the warrior's for the assassin's part;
To dirty hands, a dirty bribe conveys,
Bids the low street and lofty palace blaze.
Her sons too weak to vanquish us alone,
She hires the worst and basest of our own.
Kneel, France! a suppliant conquers us with ease;
We always spare a coward on his knees.

I have often wondered that Dryden's illustrious epigram on Milton (in my mind the second best that ever was made) has never been translated into Latin, for the admiration of the learned in other countries.

I have at last presumed to venture upon the task myself. The great closeness of the original, which is equal in that respect to the most compact Latin I ever saw, made it extremely difficult.

Tres, tria, sed longe distantia sæcula, Vates
Ostentant, tribus e gentibus, eximios.
Græcia sublimem, cum majestate disertum
Roma tulit, felix Anglia utrisque parem.
Partubus ex binis Natura exhausta, coacta est
Tertius ut fieret, consociare Duos.

I have not one bright thought upon the chancellor's recovery; nor can I strike off so much as one sparkling atom from that brilliant subject. It is not when I will, nor upon what I will, but as a thought happens to occur to me; and then I versify, whether I will or not. I never write but for my amusement; and what I write is sure to answer that end, if it answers no other. If, besides this purpose, the more desirable one of entertaining you be effected, I then receive double fruit of my labour, and consider this produce of it as a second crop, the more valuable, because less expected. But when I have once remitted a composition to you, I have done with it. It is pretty certain that I shall never read it or think of it again. From that moment I have constituted you sole judge of its accomplishments, if it has any, and of its defects, which it is sure to have.

For this reason I decline answering the question with which you concluded your last, and cannot persuade myself to enter into a critical examen of the two pieces upon Lord Mansfield's loss, either with respect

to their intrinsic or comparative merit; and indeed after having rather discouraged that use of them which you had designed, there is no occasion for it.

I understand, though I have not seen it, that the author of Thelypthora establishes many of his premises upon his own peculiar interpretation of the original Hebrew. I am therefore absolutely incompetent to decide the question whether he has Scripture on his side or not, and have no more curiosity to see his book than I should have if it were written in that language. If I had a wife of whom I was weary, and wished to be indulged with the liberty of taking another, I would certainly read it, and study it too. I should be encouraged in this undertaking, by a hope that passion, prejudice, and appetite combining together with the author's ingenuity to impose upon me, might succeed, and release me from the rusty and old fashioned bonds of fidelity, friendship, and love. But I have no interest in the question, at least no other interest than that of every man who wishes well to his country, and would be sorry to see the honest and faithful English husband converted into a Turkish stallion, and the amiable character of the English wife, the most amiable in the world, degraded into the sordid and base condition of a brood mare.

W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER, PARK STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE.

MY DEAR COUSIN, July 20, 1780.

MR. NEWTON having desired me to be of the party, I am come to meet him. You see me sixteen years older, at the least, than when I saw you last; but the effects of time seem to have taken place rather on the outside of my head than within it. What was brown is become gray, but what was foolish remains foolish still. Green fruit must rot before it ripens, if the season is such as to afford it nothing but cold winds and dark clouds, that interrupt every ray of sunshine. My days steal away silently, and march on (as poor mad King Lear would have made his soldiers march) as if they were shod with felt; not so silently but that I hear them; yet were it not that I am always listening to their flight, having no infirmity that I had not when I was much younger, I should deceive myself with an imagination that I am still young.

I am fond of writing as an amusement, but do not always find it one. Being rather scantily furnished with subjects that are good for any thing, and corresponding only with those who have no relish for such as are good for nothing, I often find myself reduced to the necessity, the disagreeable necessity, of writing about myself. This does not mend the matter much; for though in a description of my own condition, I discover abundant materials to employ my pen upon, yet as the task is not very agreeable to *me*, so I am sufficiently aware that it is likely to prove irksome to others. A painter who should confine himself in the *exercise* of his art to the drawing of his own picture,

must be a wonderful coxcomb, if he did not soon grow sick of his occupation; and be peculiarly fortunate, if he did not make others as sick as himself.

Remote as your dwelling is from the late scene of riot and confusion, I hope that though you could not but hear the report, you heard no more, and that the roarings of the mad multitude did not reach you. That was a day of terror to the innocent, and the present is a day of still greater terror to the guilty. The law was for a few moments like an arrow in the quiver, seemed to be of no use, and did no execution; now it is an arrow upon the string, and many, who despised it lately, are trembling as they stand before the point of it.

I have talked more already than I have formerly done in three visits:—you remember my taciturnity, never to be forgotten by those who knew me. Not to depart entirely from what might be, for aught I know, the most shining part of my character, I here shut my mouth, make my bow, and return to Olney.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 27, 1780.

As two men sit silent, after having exhausted all their topics of conversation, one says—"It is very fine weather,"—and the other says—"Yes;"—one blows his nose, and the other rubs his eyebrows; (by the way, this is very much in Homer's manner,) such seems to be the case between you and me.

After a silence of some days, I wrote you a long something, that (I suppose) was nothing to the purpose, because it has not afforded you materials for an answer. Nevertheless, as it often happens in the case above-stated, one of the distressed parties, being deeply sensible of the awkwardness of a dumb duet, breaks silence again, and resolves to speak, though he has nothing to say. So it fares with me; I am with you again in the form of an epistle, though considering my present emptiness, I have reason to fear that your only joy upon the occasion will be, that it is conveyed to you in a frank.

When I began, I expected no interruption. But if I had expected interruptions without end, I should have been less disappointed. First came the barber; who, after having embellished the outside of my head, has left the inside just as unfurnished as he found it. Then came Olney bridge,—not into the house, but into the conversation. The cause relating to it was tried on Tuesday at Buckingham. The judge directed the jury to find a verdict favourable to Olney. The jury consisted of one knave and eleven fools. The last-mentioned followed the afore-mentioned, as sheep follow a bell-wether, and decided in direct opposition to the said judge. Then a flaw was discovered in the indictment. The indictment was quashed, and an order made for a new trial. The new trial will be in the King's Bench, where said knave and said fools will have nothing to do with it. So the men of Olney fling up their caps, and assure themselves of a complete victory. A victory will save me and your mother

many shillings, perhaps some pounds, which, except that it has afforded me a subject to write upon, was the only reason why I have said so much about it. I know you take an interest in all that concerns us, and will consequently rejoice with us in the prospect of an event in which we are concerned so nearly.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR SIR, July 30, 1780.

YOU may think perhaps that I deal more liberally with Mr. Unwin, in the way of poetical export than I do with you, and I believe you have reason: the truth is this;—If I walked the streets with a fiddle under my arm, I should never think of performing before the window of a Privy Counsellor, or a Chief Justice, but should rather make free with ears more likely to be open to such amusement. The trifles I produce in this way are indeed such trifles, that I cannot think them seasonable presents for you. Mr. Unwin himself would not be offended if I was to tell him that there is this difference between him and Mr. Newton; that the latter is already an apostle, while he himself is only undergoing the business of an incubation, with a hope that he may be hatched in time. When my Muse comes forth arrayed in sables, at least in a robe of graver cast, I make no scruple to direct her to my friend at Hoxton. This has been one reason why I have so long delayed the riddle. But lest I should

seem to set a value upon it, that I do not, by making it an object of still further inquiry, here it comes.

I am just two and two, I am warm, I am cold,
And the parent of numbers that cannot be told;
I am lawful, unlawful—a duty, a fault;
I am often sold dear, good for nothing when bought,
An extraordinary boon, and a matter of course,
And yielded with pleasure—when taken by force.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, August 6, 1780.

You like to hear from me: this is a very good reason why I should write.—But I have nothing to say: this seems equally a good reason why I should not. Yet if you had alighted from your horse at our door this morning, and at this present writing, being five o'clock in the afternoon, had found occasion to say to me—"Mr. Cowper, you have not spoke since I came in; have you resolved never to speak again?" it would be but a poor reply, if in answer to the summons I should plead inability as my best and only excuse. And this by the way suggests to me a seasonable piece of instruction, and reminds me of what I am very apt to forget, when I have any epistolary business in hand, that a letter may be written upon any thing or nothing just as that any thing or nothing happens to occur. A man that has a journey before him twenty miles in length, which he is to perform on foot, will not hesitate and doubt whether he shall set out or not, because

he does not readily conceive how he shall ever reach the end of it: for he knows, that by the simple operation of moving one foot forward first, and then the other, he shall be sure to accomplish it. So it is in the present case, and so it is in every similar case. A letter is written as a conversation is maintained, or a journey performed; not by preconcerted or premeditated means, a new contrivance, or an invention never heard of before,—but merely by maintaining a progress, and resolving as a postilion does, having once set out, never to stop till we reach the appointed end. If a man may talk without thinking, why may he not write upon the same terms? A grave gentleman of the last century, a tie-wig, square-toe, Steinkirk figure, would say—"My good sir, a man has no right to do either." But it is to be hoped that the present century has nothing to do with the mouldy opinions of the last; and so good Sir Launcelot, or Sir[1] Paul, or whatever be your name, step into your picture-frame again, and look as if you thought for another century, and leave us moderns in the mean time to think when we can, and to write whether we can or not, else we might as well be dead as you are.

When we look back upon our forefathers, we seem to look back upon the people of another nation, almost upon creatures of another species. Their vast rambling mansions, spacious halls, and painted casements, the gothic porch smothered with honeysuckles, their little gardens and high walls, their box-edgings, balls of holly, and yew-tree statues, are become so entirely

[1] A whimsical blunder in one edition of Cowper's works has converted this into *St. Paul.*

unfashionable now, that we can hardly believe it possible, that a people who resembled us so little in their taste, should resemble us in any thing else. But in every thing else, I suppose, they were our counterparts exactly; and time, that has sewed up the slashed sleeve, and reduced the large trunk hose to a neat pair of silk stockings, has left human nature just where it found it. The inside of the man at least has undergone no change. His passions, appetites, and aims, are just what they ever were. They wear perhaps a handsomer disguise than they did in days of yore; for philosophy and literature will have their effect upon the exterior; but in every other respect a modern is only an ancient in a different dress.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

August 21, 1780.

THE following occurrence ought not to be passed over in silence, in a place where so few notable ones are to be met with. Last Wednesday night, while we were at supper, between the hours of eight and nine, I heard an unusual noise in the back parlour, as if one of the hares was entangled, and endeavouring to disengage herself. I was just going to rise from table, when it ceased. In about five minutes, a voice on the outside of the parlour door inquired if one of my hares had got away. I immediately rushed into the next room, and found that my poor favourite Puss had made her escape. She had gnawed in sunder

the strings of a lattice work, with which I thought I had sufficiently secured the window, and which I preferred to any other sort of blind, because it admitted plenty of air. From thence I hastened to the kitchen, where I saw the redoubtable Thomas Freeman, who told me, that having seen her, just after she had dropped into the street, he attempted to cover her with his hat, but she screamed out, and leaped directly over his head. I then desired him to pursue as fast as possible, and added Richard Coleman to the chase, as being nimbler, and carrying less weight than Thomas; not expecting to see her again, but desirous to learn, if possible, what became of her. In something less than an hour, Richard returned, almost breathless, with the following account. That soon after he began to run, he left Tom behind him, and came in sight of a most numerous hunt of men, women, children, and dogs; that he did his best to keep back the dogs, and presently outstripped the crowd, so that the race was at last disputed between himself and Puss;—she ran right through the town, and down the lane that leads to Dropshort; a little before she came to the house, he got the start and turned her; she pushed for the town again, and soon after she entered it, sought shelter in Mr. Wagstaff's tanyard, adjoining to old Mr. Drake's. Sturges's harvest men were at supper, and saw her from the opposite side of the way. There she encountered the tanpits full of water; and while she was struggling out of one pit, and plunging into another, and almost drowned, one of the men drew her out by the ears, and secured her. She was then well washed in a bucket,

to get the lime out of her coat, and brought home in a sack at ten o'clock.

This frolic cost us four shillings, but you may believe we did not grudge a farthing of it. The poor creature received only a little hurt in one of her claws, and in one of her ears, and is now almost as well as ever.

I do not call this an answer to your letter, but such as it is I send it, presuming upon that interest which I know you take in my minutest concerns, which I cannot express better than in the words of Terence a little varied—*Nihil mei a te alienum putas.*

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER, PARK STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE.

MY DEAR COUSIN, August 31, 1780.

I AM obliged to you for your long letter, which did not seem so; and for your short one, which was more than I had any reason to expect. Short as it was, it conveyed to me two interesting articles of intelligence: An account of your recovering from a fever, and of Lady Cowper's death. The latter was, I suppose, to be expected, for by what remembrance I have of her ladyship, who was never much acquainted with her, she had reached those years that are always found upon the borders of another world. As for you, your time of life is comparatively of a youthful date. You may think of death as much as you please, (you cannot think of it too much), but I hope you will live to think of it many years.

It costs me not much difficulty to suppose that my friends who were already grown old when I saw them last, are old still; but it costs me a good deal sometimes to think of those who were at that time young, as being older than they were. Not having been an eye-witness of the change that time has made in them, and my former idea of them not being corrected by observation, it remains the same; my memory presents me with this image unimpaired, and while it retains the resemblance of what they were, forgets that by this time the picture may have lost much of its likeness, through the alteration that succeeding years have made in the original. I know not what impressions Time may have made upon your person, for while his claws, (as our grannams called them) strike deep furrows in some faces, he seems to sheath them with much tenderness, as if fearful of doing injury to others. But though an enemy to the person, he is a friend to the mind, and you have found him so. Though even in this respect his treatment of us depends upon what he meets with at our hands; if we use him well, and listen to his admonitions, he is a friend indeed, but otherwise the worst of enemies, who takes from us daily something that we valued, and gives us nothing better in its stead. It is well with them who, like you, can stand a tiptoe on the mountain top of human life, look down with pleasure upon the valley they have passed, and sometimes stretch their wings in joyful hope of a happy flight into eternity. Yet a little while, and your hope will be accomplished.

When you can favour me with a little account of

your own family, without inconvenience, I shall be glad to receive it; for though separated from my kindred by little more than half a century of miles, I know as little of their concerns as if oceans and continents were interposed between us.

Yours, my dear cousin,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 3, 1780.

I AM glad you are so provident, and that, while you are yet young, you have furnished yourself with the means of comfort in old age. Your crutch and your pipe may be of use to you, (and may they be so,) should your years be extended to an antediluvian date; and for your present accommodation, you seem to want nothing but a clerk called Snuffle, and a sexton of the name of Skeleton, to make your ministerial equipage complete.

I think I have read as much of the first volume of the Biographia as I shall ever read. I find it very amusing; more so perhaps than it would have been had they sifted their characters with more exactness, and admitted none but those who had in some way or other entitled themselves to immortality, by deserving well of the public. Such a compilation would perhaps have been more judicious, though I confess it would have afforded less variety. The priests and the monks of earlier, and the doctors of later days, who have signalized themselves by nothing but a controversial *pamphlet*, long since thrown by, and never to be

perused again, might have been forgotten, without injury or loss to the national character for learning or genius. This observation suggested to me the following lines, which may serve to illustrate my meaning, and at the same time to give my criticism a sprightlier air.

Oh fond attempt, to give a deathless lot
To names ignoble, born to be forgot!
In vain, recorded in historic page,
They court the notice of a future age;
Those twinkling, tiny lustres of the land
Drop one by one, from Fame's neglecting hand;
Lethean gulfs receive them as they fall,
And dark oblivion soon absorbs them all.
So when a child (as playful children use)
Has burnt to cinder a stale last-year's news,
The flame extinct, he views the roving fire,
There goes my lady, and there goes the squire,
There goes the parson——O illustrious spark!
And there——scarce less illustrious——goes the clerk!

Virgil admits none but worthies into the Elysian Fields; I cannot recollect the lines in which he describes them all, but these in particular I well remember—

Quique sui memores alios fecêre merendo,
Inventas aut qui vitam excoluêre per artes.

A chaste and scrupulous conduct like his would well become the writer of national biography. But enough of this.

Our respects attend Miss Shuttleworth, with many thanks for her intended present. Some purses derive all their value from their contents, but these will have an intrinsic value of their own: and though mine should

be often empty, which is not an improbable supposition, I shall still esteem it highly on its own account.

If you could meet with a second-hand Virgil, ditto Homer, both Iliad and Odyssey, together with a Clavis, for I have no Lexicon, and all tolerably cheap, I shall be obliged to you if you will make the purchase.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 7, 1780.

As many gentlemen as there are in the world, who have children, and heads capable of reflecting on the important subject of their education, so many opinions there are about it; many of them just and sensible, though almost all differing from each other. With respect to the education of boys, I think they are generally made to draw in Latin and Greek trammels too soon. It is pleasing, no doubt, to a parent, to see his child already in some sort a proficient in those languages, at an age when most others are entirely ignorant of them; but hence it often happens, that a boy, who could construe a fable in Æsop at six or seven years of age, having exhausted his little stock of attention and diligence in making that notable acquisition, grows weary of his task, conceives a dislike for study, and perhaps makes but a very indifferent progress afterwards. The mind and the body have in this respect a striking resemblance of each other. In childhood they are both nimble, but not strong; they can skip and frisk about with wonderful agility, but *hard labour* spoils them both. In maturer years they

I have ever heard of. To pronounce it well, to speak and to write it with fluency and elegance, are no easy attainments; not one in fifty of those who pass through Westminster and Eton, arrive at any remarkable proficiency in these accomplishments; and they that do are more indebted to their own study and application for it, than to any instruction received there. In general, there is nothing so pedantic as the style of a schoolboy, if he aims at any style at all; and if he does not, he is of course inelegant, and perhaps ungrammatical. A defect, no doubt, in great measure owing to the want of cultivation; for the same lad that is often commended for his Latin, frequently would deserve to be whipped for his English, if the fault were not more his master's than his own. I know not where this evil is so likely to be prevented as at home, —supposing always, nevertheless (which is the case in your instance), that the boy's parents, and their acquaintance, are persons of elegance and taste themselves. For to converse with those who converse with propriety, and to be directed to such authors as have refined and improved the language by their productions, are advantages which he cannot elsewhere enjoy in an equal degree. And though it requires some time to regulate the taste, and fix the judgement, and these effects must be gradually wrought even upon the best understanding, yet I suppose much less time will be necessary for the purpose than could at first be imagined, because the opportunities of improvement are continual.

I promised to say little on this topic, and I have

ceive that in my judgement the difficulty, as well as the wisdom, consists more in bridling in, and keeping back, a boy of his parts, than in pushing him forward. If, therefore, at the end of the two next years, instead of putting a grammar into his hand, you should allow him to amuse himself with some agreeable writers upon the subject of natural philosophy for another year, I think it would answer well. There is a book called Cosmotheoria Puerilis, there are Derham's Physico-, and Astro-theology, together with several others, in the same manner, very intelligible even to a child, and full of useful instruction.

Plums and pears in my next.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 17, 1780.

You desire my further thoughts on the subject of education. I send you such as had for the most part occurred to me when I wrote last, but could not be comprised in a single letter. They are indeed on a different branch of this interesting theme, but not less important than the former.

I think it your happiness, and wish you to think it so yourself, that you are in every respect qualified for the task of instructing your son, and preparing him for the university, without committing him to the care of a stranger. In my judgement, a domestic education deserves the preference to a public one on a hundred accounts, which I have neither time nor room to mention. I shall only touch upon two or three (

I cannot but consider as having a right to your most earnest attention.

In a public school, or indeed in any school, his morals are sure to be but little attended to, and his religion not at all. If he can catch the love of virtue from the fine things that are spoken of it in the classics, and the love of holiness from a customary attendance upon such preaching as he is likely to hear, it will be well; but I am sure you have had too many opportunities to observe the inefficacy of such means, to expect any such advantage from them. In the mean time, the more powerful influence of bad example, and perhaps bad company, will continually counterwork these only preservatives he can meet with, and may possibly send him home to you, at the end of five or six years, such as you will be sorry to see him. You escaped indeed the contagion yourself; but a few instances of happy exemption from a general malady are no sufficient warrant to conclude, that it is therefore not infectious, or may be encountered without danger.

You have seen too much of the world, and are a man of too much reflection, not to have observed that in proportion as the sons of a family approach to years of maturity, they lose a sense of obligation to their parents, and seem at last almost divested of that tender affection which the nearest of all relations seems to demand from them. I have often observed it myself, and have always thought I could sufficiently account for it, without laying all the blame upon the children. While they continue in their parents' house, they are every day obliged, and every day reminded how much

it is their interest, as well as duty, to be obliging and affectionate in return. But at eight or nine years of age the boy goes to school. From that moment he becomes a stranger in his father's house. The course of parental kindness is intercepted. The smiles of his mother, the tender admonitions, and the solicitous care of both his parents, are no longer before his eyes: year after year he feels himself more and more detached from them, till at last he is so effectually weaned from the connexion, as to find himself happier any where than in their company.

I should have been glad of a frank for this letter, for I have said but little of what I could say upon the subject, and perhaps I may not be able to catch it by the end again. If I can, I shall add to it hereafter.

The Breda is the best late apricot, and the Empress or *Imperatrice* plum is that which your mother principally recommends. It turns to a fine dried sweetmeat upon the tree, but must not be gathered sooner.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 5, 1780.

Now for the sequel. You have anticipated one of my arguments in favour of a private education, therefore I need say but little about it. The folly of supposing that the mother-tongue, in some respects the most difficult of all tongues, may be acquired without a teacher, is predominant in all the public schools that

I have ever heard of. To pronounce it well, to speak and to write it with fluency and elegance, are no easy attainments; not one in fifty of those who pass through Westminster and Eton, arrive at any remarkable proficiency in these accomplishments; and they that do are more indebted to their own study and application for it, than to any instruction received there. In general, there is nothing so pedantic as the style of a schoolboy, if he aims at any style at all; and if he does not, he is of course inelegant, and perhaps ungrammatical. A defect, no doubt, in great measure owing to the want of cultivation; for the same lad that is often commended for his Latin, frequently would deserve to be whipped for his English, if the fault were not more his master's than his own. I know not where this evil is so likely to be prevented as at home, —supposing always, nevertheless (which is the case in your instance), that the boy's parents, and their acquaintance, are persons of elegance and taste themselves. For to converse with those who converse with propriety, and to be directed to such authors as have refined and improved the language by their productions, are advantages which he cannot elsewhere enjoy in an equal degree. And though it requires some time to regulate the taste, and fix the judgement, and these effects must be gradually wrought even upon the best understanding, yet I suppose much less time will be necessary for the purpose than could at first be imagined, because the opportunities of improvement are continual.

I promised to say little on this topic, and I have

said so much, that if I had not a frank I must burn my letter and begin again.

A public education is often recommended as the most effectual remedy for that bashful and awkward constraint, so epidemical among the youth of our country. But I verily believe that instead of being a cure, it is often the cause of it. For seven or eight years of his life, the boy has hardly seen or conversed with a man, or a woman, except the maids at his boarding house. A gentleman or a lady are consequently such novelties to him, that he is perfectly at a loss to know what sort of behaviour he should preserve before them. He plays with his buttons, or the strings of his hat, he blows his nose, and hangs down his head, is conscious of his own deficiency to a degree that makes him quite unhappy, and trembles lest any one should speak to him, because that would quite overwhelm him. Is not all this miserable shyness evidently the effect of his education? To me it appears to be so. If he saw good company every day, he would never be terrified at the sight of it, and a room full of ladies and gentlemen would alarm him no more than the chairs they sit on. Such is the effect of custom.

I need add nothing further on this subject, because I believe little John is as likely to be exempted from this weakness as most young gentlemen we shall meet with. He seems to have his father's spirit in this respect, in whom I could never discern the least trace of bashfulness, though I have often heard him complain of it. Under your management, and the influence of your example, I think he can hardly fail to escape it.

If he does, he escapes that which makes many a man uncomfortable for life; and has ruined not a few, by forcing them into mean and dishonourable company, where only they could be free and cheerful.

Connexions formed at school are said to be lasting, and often beneficial. There are two or three stories of this kind upon record, which would not be so constantly cited as they are, whenever this subject happens to be mentioned, if the chronicle that preserves their remembrance had many besides to boast of. For my own part, I found such friendships, though warm enough in their commencement, surprisingly liable to extinction; and of seven or eight, whom I had selected for intimates out of about three hundred, in ten years time not one was left me. The truth is, that there may be, and often is, an attachment of one boy to another, that looks very like a friendship; and while they are in circumstances that enable them mutually to oblige and to assist each other, promises well, and bids fair to be lasting. But they are no sooner separated from each other, by entering into the world at large, than other connexions, and new employments, in which they no longer share together, efface the remembrance of what passed in earlier days, and they become strangers to each other for ever. Add to this, that the *man* frequently differs so much from the *boy*,—his principles, manners, temper, and conduct, undergo so great an alteration,—that we no longer recognise in him our old playfellow, but find him utterly unworthy and unfit for the place he once held in our affections.

To close this article, as I did the last, by applying myself immediately to the present concern,—little John is happily placed above all occasion for dependance upon such precarious hopes, and need not be sent to school in quest of some great man in embryo, who may possibly make his fortune.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

DEAR MADAM, Oct. 5, 1780.

WHEN a lady speaks, it is not civil to make her wait a week for an answer.—I received your letter within this hour, and, foreseeing that the garden will engross much of my time for some days to come, have seized the present opportunity to acknowledge it. I congratulate you on Mr. Newton's safe arrival at Ramsgate, making no doubt but that he reached the place without difficulty or danger, the road thither from Canterbury being so good as to afford room for neither. He has now a view of the element, with which he was once so familiar, but which I think he has not seen for many years. The sight of his old acquaintance will revive in his mind a pleasing recollection of past deliverances, and when he looks at him from the beach, he may say—"You have formerly given me trouble enough, but I have cast anchor now where your billows can never reach me."—It is happy for him that he can say so.

Mrs. Unwin returns you many thanks for your

anxiety on her account. Her health is considerably mended upon the whole, so as to afford us a hope that it will be established.

Our love attends you.

Yours, dear madam,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Nov. 9, 1780.

I WROTE the following last summer. The tragical occasion of it really happened at the next house to ours. I am glad when I can find a subject to work upon; a lapidary I suppose accounts it a laborious part of his business to rub away the roughness of the stone; but it is my amusement, and if after all the polishing I can give it, it discovers some little lustre, I think myself well rewarded for my pains[1].

I shall charge you a halfpenny a-piece for every copy I send you, the short as well as the long. This is a sort of afterclap you little expected, but I cannot possibly afford them at a cheaper rate. If this method of raising money had occurred to me sooner, I should have made the bargain sooner; but am glad I have hit upon it at last. It will be a considerable encouragement to my muse, and act as a powerful stimulus to my industry. If the American war should last much longer, I may be obliged to raise my price; but this I shall not do without a real occasion for it:—it depends much upon Lord North's pretty conduct in the article of supplies. If he imposes an additional tax

[1] Verses on a Goldfinch starved to death in a cage.

on any thing that I deal in, the necessity of this measure, on my part, will be so apparent, that I dare say you will not dispute it.

Your mother desires me to add her love to mine, which waits on you all as usual. She is much pleased with your desire to hear from her, but having such an industrious secretary in me, she thought it the less necessary. She will use her own hand, however, when her nerves, which are seldom well strung, and which this turbulent weather particularly discomposes, will give her leave.

W. C.

TO THE REV. W. UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 24, 1780.

I AM sensibly mortified at finding myself obliged to disappoint you; but though I have had many thoughts upon the subjects you propose to my consideration, I have had none that have been favourable to the undertaking. I applaud your purpose, for the sake of the principle from which it springs, but I look upon the evils you mean to animadvert upon, as too obstinate and inveterate ever to be expelled by the means you mention. The very persons to whom you would address your remonstrance, are themselves sufficiently aware of their enormity; years ago, to my knowledge, they were frequently the topics of conversation at polite tables; they have been frequently mentioned in both houses of Parliament, and I suppose there is hardly a member of either who would not immediately assent to the necessity of a reform were it proposed

to him in a reasonable way. But there it stops, and there it will for ever stop, till the majority are animated with a zeal, in which at present they are deplorably defective. A religious man is unfeignedly shocked when he reflects upon the prevalence of such crimes; a moral man must needs be so in a degree, and will affect to be much more so than he is. But how many do you suppose there are among our worthy representatives, that come under either of these descriptions? If all were such, yet to new model the police of the country, which must be done, in order to make even unavoidable perjury less frequent, were a task they would hardly undertake, on account of the great difficulty that would attend it. Government is too much interested in the consumption of malt liquor to reduce the number of venders. Such plausible pleas may be offered in defence of travelling on Sundays, especially by the trading part of the world, as the whole bench of Bishops would find it difficult to overrule. And with respect to the violation of oaths, till a certain name is more generally respected than it is at present, however such persons as yourself many be grieved at it, the legislature are never likely to lay it to heart. I do not mean, nor would by any means attempt to discourage you in so laudable an enterprise; but such is the light in which it appears to me, that I do not feel the least spark of courage, qualifying or prompting me to embark in it myself. An exhortation, therefore, written by me,—by hopeless desponding me,—would be flat, insipid, and uninteresting, and disgrace the cause, instead of serving it. If after what I have said, however, you still retain the same sentiments, *Macte, esto virtute*

tua! there is nobody better qualified than yourself, and may your success prove that I despaired of it without a reason.

Your poor sister!—she has many good qualities, and upon some occasions gives proof of a good understanding; but as some people have no ear for music, so she has none for humour. Well,—if she cannot laugh at our jokes, we can, however, at her mistakes, and in this way she makes us ample amends for the disappointment. Mr. Powley is much like herself: if his wife overlooks the jest, he will never be able to find it. They were neither of them born to write epigrams or ballads, and I ought to be less mortified at the coldness with which they entertain my small sallies in the way of drollery, when I reflect that if Swift himself had had no other judges, he would never have found one admirer.

It is indeed, as you observe, incumbent upon Mr. Madan to reply to the reviewer, if he means to maintain his point. But unless he means likewise to expose himself more in a second attempt, than he did even in his first, it is still more incumbent upon him to be silent. I reckon myself a competent judge of the argument, so far as the Greek criticisms are in question; and if I am, a refutation of what his antagonist has advanced against that part of his performance, is (I think) impossible. That impossibility is followed close at the heels by a conclusion not to be avoided. Syllogistically dressed, it stands thus: The Scripture is the only ground on which the doctrine of polygamy can be proved.

But it cannot be proved by Scripture.

Ergo—Not at all.

You desired me, some time since, to send you my twenty-seven answers to ditto number of queries drawn up by the Rev. Mr. Riland, of Birmingham. I would have done it, if the Review had not made it entirely unnecessary. The gentleman, for whose use in particular I designed them, declined sending them to the querist at my instance; so that, immediately almost after their production, they became waste paper, and I kept no copy of them myself. The questions discovered such marks of almost childish imbecility, that I could not possibly propose to myself the acquisition of any credit by the answers. But as some men, especially weak ones, are apt to suppose themselves irrefragable and invincible in disputation, I replied to them merely to guard the poor gentleman against the pernicious effects of so sad a blunder upon an occasion of such importance.

My respects attend the family, that is to say, my affectionate ones. I heartily wish Mrs. Unwin better spirits. Never be afraid of the multiplication of children; you do not make them yourself, and He that does, knows how to provide for them. Poor bare-breeched Billy, to whom your alms were yesterday so acceptable, has no desponding thoughts upon this subject, though he has now four, and considering his age, and the age of his wife, may possibly have fourteen.

Yours, my dear friend,

WM. COWPER

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 25, 1780.

WEARY with rather a long walk in the snow, I am not likely to write a very sprightly letter, or to produce any thing that may cheer this gloomy season, unless I have recourse to my pocket-book, where perhaps I may find something to transcribe,—something that was written before the sun had taken leave of our hemisphere, and when I was less fatigued than I am at present.

Happy is the man who knows just so much of the law, as to make himself a little merry now and then with the solemnity of juridical proceedings. I have heard of common law judgements before now, indeed have been present at the delivery of some, that, according to my poor apprehension, while they paid the utmost respect to the letter of a statute, have departed widely from the spirit of it; and, being governed entirely by the point of law, have left equity, reason, and common sense, behind them at an infinite distance. You will judge whether the following report of a case, drawn up by myself, be not a proof and illustration of this satirical assertion[1].

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

[1] The "Report of an adjudged Case, not to be found in any of the Books," concluded this letter.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 1780.

POETICAL reports of law cases are not very common, yet it seems to me desirable that they should be so. Many advantages would accrue from such a measure. They would in the first place be more commodiously deposited in the memory, just as linen, grocery, or other such matters, when neatly packed, are known to occupy less room, and to lie more conveniently in any trunk, chest, or box, to which they may be committed. In the next place, being divested of that infinite circumlocution, and the endless embarrassment in which they are involved by it, they would become surprisingly intelligible, in comparison with their present obscurity. And lastly, they would by this means be rendered susceptible of musical embellishment, and instead of being quoted in the courts, with that dull monotony, which is so wearisome to by-standers, and frequently lulls even the judges themselves to sleep, might be rehearsed in recitative; which would have an admirable effect, in keeping the attention fixed and lively, and could not fail to disperse that heavy atmosphere of sadness and gravity, which hangs over the jurisprudence of our country. I remember, many years ago, being informed by a relation of mine, who in his youth had applied himself to the study of the law, that one of his fellow students, a gentleman of sprightly parts, and very respectable talents of the poetical kind, did actually engage in the prosecution of such a design; for reasons I suppose somewhat similar to, if not the same with those I have now suggested. He began

with Coke's Institutes; a book so rugged in its style, that an attempt to polish it seemed an Herculean labour, and not less arduous and difficult, than it would be to give the smoothness of a rabbit's fur to the prickly back of a hedgehog. But he succeeded to admiration, as you will perceive by the following specimen, which is all that my said relation could recollect of the performance.

Tenant in fee
Simple, is he,
And need neither quake nor quiver,
Who hath his lands,
Free from all demands,
To him and his heirs for ever.

You have an ear for music, and a taste for verse, which saves me the trouble of pointing out with a critical nicety the advantages of such a version. I proceed therefore to what I at first intended, and to transcribe the record of an adjudged case thus managed, to which indeed what I have premised was intended merely as an introduction[1].

W. C.

TO THE REV. W. UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 14, 1781.

I SELDOM write what may properly be called an answer to a letter, unless to a letter that requires an answer; but on the present occasion, being conscious that I

[1] This letter concluded with the poetical law case of "Nose, plaintiff—Eyes, defendants," before referred to.

have not spirits to enable me to make excursions on the wings of invention, I purpose to confine myself pretty much to the subject of yours. Which prudent procedure will serve the double purpose of relieving me from the toil of pumping in vain, and of convincing you that you cannot do a worse thing than to deprive me of your letters, upon an apprehension that they can afford me neither profit nor amusement.

Impressions made upon the mind in our early days are seldom entirely effaced. This is an old observation, but I shall engraft a new one upon it. Though you have a perfect recollection of John Cross's pious and wise remark, I am sadly afraid that you have never made a practical use of it, which I the more wonder at, because his unexpected good fortune in the instance you allude to, amounts almost to a proof of the great utility of such a custom. How is it possible, were you but properly careful to keep that part uppermost at the time of rising, that you could be plagued as you are with such a variety of misadventures?—tithes unpaid, dilapidations without end, lawsuits revived, and your curate running away from you, for the sake of a pleasanter country. I dare say John Cross was exempted from all these disagreeable occurrences; he had not half your understanding, yet knew how to avoid them all by attending to the main chance in the article you hint at. He presented something more substantial than even a seven-fold shield to the arrows of ill fortune; and receiving them, if he received them at all, where they could not possibly reach his heart, went through the world insensible of the troubles with which it abounds. He clapped his hand upon you

know what, and said to misfortune, Now, madam, I defy you. This you know as well as I, this therefore you should practise; and though you cannot, I suppose, boast of such a buttress as he was fenced with, yet, *pro modulo*, and according to your ability, you should make that use of it his example teaches, and the most of a little.

From Mr. Madan's renewed publication, I cannot but infer that he preserves the same conduct as before he published at all. Letters of admonition, dissuasion, and exhortation, he burned unread; and has treated, I suppose, the Review with the same obstinate indifference and contempt. I the rather think so, because I am firmly persuaded he could not reply to his answerer; though it is possible his case may resemble that of a certain disputant I have heard of, who said upon a like occasion, "I am confuted, but not convinced."

Impregnable, however, as he may be to the attacks of sound reason, backed with all the authority of sound learning, his advocates are not all, it seems, quite so stubborn as himself. Mr. Riland, of Birmingham, has at last forsaken the standard of polygamy, and betaken himself to the side of Christian decorum and decency again. Mr. Powley, we learn from good authority, has been instrumental in working this conversion, which does him the more honour, as he had by all accounts a very weak, though a very good man to deal with. Men that have no large share of reason themselves, are seldom sensible of the force of it in the hands of another.

I am informed that the reviewer is preparing an

answer at large, and that the Bishop of London has likewise undertaken the task. If this be the case, *actum est de Thelyphthorâ.* I hear likewise that the king, having read a part of it, threw it down with indignation, and expressed his regret that there was no law by which such an author could be brought to the punishment he deserves. This is not unlikely, for, by all accounts, he is a moral man, and consequently a chaste husband; that he should view therefore such a proposal with abhorrence is natural enough.

Your mother returns her thanks to Mrs. Unwin for her letter. Our love attends you both, with Miss Shuttleworth and the little ones. The two guineas may be sent with the salmon, for which we thank you *par avance.*

If the lines of your letter could be pushed together they would not fill three sides; and if mine could be moved to the distance at which yours stand from each other, they would fill four. This, however, is not my reason for concluding, but because I am weary, therefore I add only that I am

Yours as ever,

WM. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON, CHARLES SQUARE, HOXTON, LONDON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 4, 1781.

WE have waited I suppose with equal impatience for a letter. Our last dispatches crossed each other, so that each of us has claimed the posteriority, the epistolary race being always won by him that comes in last. This

however has not been the only reason of my silence. I have been very busy in my way, and ere long you will see the fruit of my labour. I shall say nothing of it at present, except that *Truth*, though long since finished, must be postponed to this last production, and that the Progress of Error itself must not take the lead of it. Truth will be seasonable at any time, and though the Progress of Error has some connexion with the present day, it is not so closely related to the occurrences of it as the new one, which has the name of Table Talk. I have almost finished the copy of it which I intend for you, but cannot send it till from that I have transcribed another for myself, the original being written on so many scrips and scraps that it would be very troublesome to range them, and indeed I have no perfect copy of it but the fair one. I have not numbered the lines, but I suspect that it is longer than either of the others. Now I believe I shall hang up my harp for the remainder of the year, and,

> Since Eighty-one has had so much to do,
> Postpone what yet is left till Eighty-two.

We were much pleased with your Extracts: they were so faithful to the truth, that unless Mr. Madan has much of that candour he will not allow to others, they will put his friendship for you to a strong trial; and yet so affectionate, that he cannot be displeased without the violation of every thing that deserves the name of friendship. We both long to be informed of the reception they have met with, and take it for granted you will indulge our curiosity when you can. We have been told that the Bishop of London intends

an answer to Thelyphthora, but I think his Lordship would hardly have put off the publication to so late a day. We have been told likewise that Mr. Riland is a convert to monogamy, but from some things we have heard since are obliged to doubt it.

Mr. Scott called on us the very day of his return from London. We are glad of his appointment to the curacy, and so I suppose are all, at least all but a very few, whose joy or sorrow on the occasion is of small consequence to any but themselves. And yet I think he will meet with troubles, and if my sagacity does not fail me much, I can see from what quarter they are likely to arise. Instrumentality is generally taken up with some reluctance, and laid down with a great deal more: but where such a man, so well qualified in every respect for the charge assigned him, has the care of a people, there can be no occasion for subordinate assistance. It is not his design to accept of it, and his refusal I am rather apprehensive will occasion a murmur somewhere. Even upon *your* account we are pleased with Mr. Page's departure, as some disagreeables and awkwardnesses would probably have attended your interview. He could not have refused you his pulpit, and yet there is reason to believe that you are the last man in the kingdom he would have wished to see in it. He has applied, or rather Mr. Warden Smith in his behalf, for the curacy at Ravenstone, but Mr. Chapman has given no definitive answer. Mr. Scott, I should suppose, would be sorry to see himself so succeeded. Mr. Dowbiggin's curate, (if I have spelt the strange name aright,) pays addresses to the same lady, and Mr. Jones has been ogling her not a little. But who

will be the happy man, conjecture has not yet ventured to surmise.

We wait with some impatience for the issue of Lord George's trial. Somebody, late from London, has brought hither the news that fresh disturbances are expected on the occasion, especially if he should be condemned: but what sort of patriotism is it, or what sort of zeal, that is offended when the laws of the country take their course?

We are both pretty well. Mrs. Unwin joins with me in love to yourself and Mrs. Newton.

Yours, my dear Sir,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 6, 1781.

IT is high time you should consult your own peace of mind, and not suffer the insatiable demands and unreasonable expectations of other men, to be a source of unhappiness to yourself. You have lived long enough in the world to know that it swarms with people who are always ready to take advantage of the generosity of such men as you; who say in their hearts, when they meet with such disinterested treatment as every one receives from your hands, "Now is the time;—the man has a gentlemanly regard for his character, he loves peace more than money, and will make any concessions, so that he may but approve himself to his own conscience. Let us squeeze him; he will yield well; the more he complies the more we will insist, and make him pay dear for the character

he wishes to deserve." I cannot doubt but your predecessor's curate is of this stamp; his demand wants nothing but a cocked pistol to make it felony, without benefit of clergy.

As to your proposal to the executors, if it does not give contentment, it must be for the reasons above mentioned; in which case I would recommend it to you by all means, to pay them exactly what they can lawfully demand for glebe and tithe, and not a farthing more, and in return to insist upon every penny you lay out in necessary repairs, and not a farthing less. It is wrong not to deal liberally with persons who themselves act upon liberal and honest principles; but it is weakness to be the willing dupe of artifice, and to sacrifice one's own interest for the sake of satisfying the insatiable or unjust.

We are obliged to you for the rugs, a commodity that can never come to such a place as this at an unseasonable time. We have given one to an industrious poor widow with four children, whose sister overheard her shivering in the night, and with some difficulty brought her to confess the next morning that she was half perished for want of sufficient covering. Her said sister borrowed a rug for her at a neighbour's immediately, which she had used but one night when yours arrived. And I doubt not but we shall meet with others equally indigent, and deserving of your bounty.

I hear this morning that Lord George is acquitted. I take it for granted you was at the trial, for three reasons. First, because you was in town so lately; secondly, because you have a laudable curiosity, that

acts as a spur upon your spirits on all such occasions; and thirdly, because you are slender and slim, and take up so little room that you are sure of a place when men of ampler dimensions are necessarily excluded. Tell us all that passed; and if he is indeed acquitted, let us know upon what point his acquittal turned, for at present I am rather at a loss to conceive how he could escape if the law was allowed to take its course, uninterrupted by fear and uncontrolled by a spirit of party.

Much good may your humanity do you, as it does so much good to others. You can no where find objects more entitled to your pity, than where your pity seeks them. A man whose vices and irregularities have brought his liberty and life into danger, will always be viewed with an eye of compassion by those who understand what human nature is made of. And while we acknowledge the severity of the law to be founded upon principles of necessity and justice, and are glad that there is such a barrier provided for the peace of society, if we consider that the difference between ourselves and the culprit is not of our own making, we shall be, as you are, tenderly affected with the view of his misery, and not the less so because he has brought it upon himself. I look upon the worst man in Chelmsford gaol with a more favourable eye than upon ——, who claims a servant's wages from one who never was his master.

What goes before was written in the morning. This evening I have read the trial as related in the General Evening, and can only add to what I said before, in *the words* of Horace.

——— *Miror quo facto judicium illud Fugerit.*

I give you joy of your own hair. No doubt you are a considerable gainer in your appearance by being disperiwigged. The best wig is that which most resembles the natural hair; why then should he that has hair enough of his own, have recourse to imitation? I have little doubt, but that if an arm or a leg could have been taken off with as little pain as attends the amputation of a curl or a lock of hair, the natural limb would have been thought less becoming, or less convenient, by some men, than a wooden one, and been disposed of accordingly.

Thanks for the salmon, it was perfectly good, as were the two lobsters; and the two guineas came safe. Having some verses to transcribe, and being rather weary, I add no more, except our love to the whole family, jointly and severally. Having begun my letter with a miserable pen, I was not willing to change it for a better lest my writing should not be all of a piece, but it has worn me and my patience quite out.

Yours ever,

WM. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 15, 1781.

I AM glad you were pleased with my report of so extraordinary a case. If the thought of versifying the decisions of our courts of justice had struck me, while I had the honour to attend them, it would perhaps have been no difficult matter to have compiled a

volume of such amusing and interesting precedents; which, if they wanted the eloquence of the Greek or Roman oratory, would have amply compensated that deficiency by the harmony of rhyme and metre.

Your account of my Uncle and your Mother gave me great pleasure. I have long been afraid to inquire after some in whose welfare I always feel myself interested, lest the question should produce a painful answer. Longevity is the lot of so few, and is so seldom rendered comfortable by the associations of good health and good spirits, that I could not very reasonably suppose either your relations or mine so happy in those respects, as it seems they are. May they continue to enjoy those blessings so long as the date of life shall last. I do not think that in these costermonger days, as I have a notion Falstaff calls them, an antediluvian age is at all a desirable thing; but to live comfortably, while we do live, is a great matter, and comprehends in it every thing that can be wished for on this side the curtain that hangs between Time and Eternity.

Farewell my better friend than any I have to boast of either among the lords, or gentlemen of the House of Commons.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 18, 1781.

I SEND you *Table Talk*. It is a medley of many *things*, some that may be useful, and some that, for *aught I know*, may be very diverting. I am merry

that I may decoy people into my company, and grave that they may be the better for it. Now and then I put on the garb of a philosopher, and take the opportunity that disguise procures me, to drop a word in favour of religion. In short, there is some froth, and here and there a bit of sweet-meat, which seems to entitle it justly to the name of a certain dish the ladies call a trifle. I did not choose to be more facetious, lest I should consult the taste of my readers at the expense of my own approbation; nor more serious than I have been, lest I should forfeit theirs. A poet in my circumstances has a difficult part to act: one minute obliged to bridle his humour, if he has any, and the next, to clap a spur to the sides of it: now ready to weep from a sense of the importance of his subject, and on a sudden constrained to laugh, lest his gravity should be mistaken for dulness. If this be not violent exercise for the mind, I know not what is; and if any man doubt it, let him try. Whether all this management and contrivance be necessary, I do not know, but am inclined to suspect that if my Muse was to go forth clad in Quaker colour, without one bit of riband to enliven her appearance, she might walk from one end of London to the other, as little noticed as if she were one of the sisterhood indeed.

As to the word you mention, I a little suspected that you would object to it, though I really thought that a book which cannot be supposed to have been written under a blessing, and that has certainly carried mischief with it into many families, deserved an epithet as harsh as that which I had given it. It is a bargain however that I have made with my lady Muse,

never to defend, or stickle for any thing that you object to. So the line may stand if you please thus,

Abhorr'd Thelyphthora, &c.

—you will meet with the obnoxious word again, in the copy I send you now, but coupled with a substantive of so filthy a character, that I persuade myself you will have no objection to the use of it in such a connexion. I am no friend to the use of words taken from what an uncle of mine called the diabolical dictionary, but it happens sometimes that a coarse expression is almost necessary to do justice to the indignation excited by an abominable subject. I am obliged to you, however, for your opinion; and though poetry is apt to betray one into a warmth that one is not sensible of in writing prose, shall always desire to be set down by it.

We are glad that so able a writer as Mr. Hill has taken up the cudgels. He is old enough to know how to reason with precision, and young enough to do it with fire and spirit. In conflicting with a disputant like Mr. Madan, I should suppose these two qualifications almost equally necessary. A writer like him, who knows how to get the laugh on his side, would be pretty secure of having the world on his side too, if his adversary had no skill in the use of the same weapon. It is such a merry world that Truth herself seems to want one of her principal recommendations, unless she will now and then condescend to the prevailing temper of her hearers. But you say you think it will do, and therefore I have no doubt of it.

Mr. Scott told Mr. Wilson yesterday or the day

before, that he had again asked Mr. Raban whether or not he intended to continue his speaking, and that Mr. Raban would give him no determinate answer. This I had from Mr. Wilson himself. It will be well if that business ends peaceably. Nothing could be more tenderly cogent than your letter to his colleague, and he, for aught I know, may be properly influenced by it; but it seems plain that either the before-mentioned had not seen it, or that if he had, he had not felt it.—Geary Ball has lost his wife. She was buried on Thursday, having left her friends a comfortable hope of her welfare.

You had been married thirty-one years last Monday. When you married I was eighteen years of age, and had just left Westminster school. At that time, I valued a man according to his proficiency and taste in classical literature, and had the meanest opinion of all other accomplishments unaccompanied by that. I lived to see the vanity of what I had made my pride, and in a few years found that there were other attainments which would carry a man more handsomely through life, than a mere knowledge of what Homer and Virgil had left behind them. In measure, as my attachment to these gentry wore off, I found a more welcome reception among those whose acquaintance it was more my interest to cultivate. But all this time was spent in painting a piece of wood, that had no life in it. At last I began to think *indeed;* I found myself in possession of many baubles, but not one grain of solidity in all my treasures. Then I learned the truth, and then I lost it; and there ends my history. I would no more than you wish to live such a life over again,

but for one reason. He that is carried to execution, though through the roughest road, when he arrives at the destined spot, would be glad, notwithstanding the many jolts he met with, to repeat his journey.

Yours, my dear Sir, with our joint love,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 27, 1781.

In the first place my paper is insufferably bad, so that though this is the second sheet on which I have begun to write, and taken from another quire, I can hardly flatter myself that I shall be able to persevere to the end of it.

I thank you for your relation of Mr. Fytche's dispute with the Bishop; it affords matter for some reflections not altogether favourable to the episcopal order, as it is easy to see that if his lordship had the power, he does not want the inclination to use the thunder of the Vatican, and anathematize a poor gentleman that dares to oppose him, without mercy. I know not in what part of Scripture he will find it revealed, that a patron, by taking a bond of resignation from the person he presents, forfeits all hope of mercy in this world, and that which is to come. Yet he asserts it as gravely as if he knew it to be true; but the laity at this time of day are wiser than when they gave their bishops credit for omnipotence, that cheat will pass no longer.

Alas, poor Vestris! what a pitiable object, how truly French in his humiliation, when he bowed his

head down to the stage and held it there, as if he never meant to raise it more! As humble in his abasement as exalted in his capers, equally French in both. Which is most entitled to compassion, the dancer who is obliged, at the expense of all that is called dignity in man, to stoop to the arbitrary requisitions of an enraged assembly, or that assembly themselves who think it worth their while to spend hours in bellowing for satisfaction from the concessions of a dancer? Considering that life does not last for ages, and they know it, it is not unreasonable to say, that both he and they might set a higher value upon their time, and devote it to a better purpose. It is possible, too, you may think that the maker of this wise reflection might himself have been better employed than in writing what follows upon the subject. I subscribe to the truth of the animadversion, and can only say, in my excuse, that the composition is short, did not cost me much time, and may perhaps provoke a longer, which is not always useless. If you please, you may send it to the Poet's Corner.

A CARD.

Poor Vestris, grieved beyond all measure,
To have incurred so much displeasure;
Although a Frenchman, disconcerted,
And though light heeled, yet heavy hearted,
Begs humbly to inform his friends,
Next first of April, he intends
To take a boat and row right down
To Cuckolds' point, from Richmond town;
And as he goes, alert and gay,
Leap all the bridges in his way;

The boat borne downward with the tide,
Shall catch him safe on t'other side;
He humbly hopes by this expedient,
To prove himself their most obedient,
(Which shall be always his endeavour,)
And jump into their former favour.

I have not forgot, though when I wrote last I did not think of answering your kind invitation. I can only say at present, that Stock shall be my first visit, but that visiting at this time would be attended with insupportable awkwardness to me, and with such as the visited themselves would assuredly feel the weight of. My witticisms are only current upon paper now, and that sort of paper currency must serve, like the Congress dollars for want of the more valuable coin, myself.

We thank you for the intended salmon, and beg you would get yourself made Bishop of Chichester as soon as possible, that we may have to thank you for every kind of eatable fish the British coast produces.

Yours ever,

WM. COWPER.

I have hurried to the end as fast as possible, being weary of a letter that is one continued blot.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 2, 1781.

FINE weather, and a variety of *extraforaneous* occupations (search Johnson's dictionary for that word, *and if* not found there, insert it—for it saves a deal

of circumlocution, and is very lawfully compounded) make it difficult, (excuse the length of a parenthesis, which I did not foresee the length of when I began it, and which may perhaps a little perplex the sense of what I am writing, though, as I seldom deal in that figure of speech, I have the less need to make an apology for doing it at present,) make it difficult (I say) for me to find opportunities for writing. My morning is engrossed by the garden; and in the afternoon, till I have drunk tea, I am fit for nothing. At five o'clock we walk; and when the walk is over, lassitude recommends rest, and again I become fit for nothing. The current hour therefore which (I need not tell you) is comprised in the interval between four and five, is devoted to your service, as the only one in the twenty-four which is not otherwise engaged.

I do not wonder that you have felt a great deal upon the occasion you mention in your last, especially on account of the asperity you have met with in the behaviour of your friend. Reflect however that as it is natural to you to have very fine feelings, it is equally natural to some other tempers, to leave those feelings entirely out of the question, and to speak to you, and to act towards you, just as they do towards the rest of mankind, without the least attention to the irritability of your system. Men of a rough and unsparing address should take great care that they be always in the right; the justness and propriety of their sentiments and censures being the only tolerable apology that can be made for such a conduct, especially in a country where civility of behaviour is inculcated even from the cradle. But in the instance now under

our contemplation I think you a sufferer under the weight of an animadversion not founded in truth, and which, consequently, you did not deserve. I account him faithful in the pulpit, who dissembles nothing that he believes, for fear of giving offence. To accommodate a discourse to the judgement and opinion of others, for the sake of pleasing them, though by doing so we are obliged to depart widely from our own, is to be unfaithful to ourselves at least, and cannot be accounted fidelity to him, whom we profess to serve. But there are few men who do not stand in need of the exercise of charity and forbearance; and the gentleman in question has afforded you an ample opportunity in this respect, to show how readily, though differing in your views, you can practise all that he could possibly expect from you, if your persuasion corresponded exactly with his own.

With respect to *Monsieur le Curé*, I think you not quite excusable for suffering such a man to give you any uneasiness at all. The grossness and injustice of his demand ought to be its own antidote. If a robber should miscall you a pitiful fellow for not carrying a purse full of gold about you, would his brutality give you any concern? I suppose not. Why then have you been distressed in the present instance?

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 8, 1781.

SINCE I commenced author, my letters are even less worth your acceptance than they were before. I shall soon, however, lay down the character, and cease to trouble you with directions to a printer, at least till the summer is over. If I live to see the return of winter, I may perhaps assume it again; but my appetite for fame is not keen enough to combat with my love of fine weather, my love of indolence, and my love of gardening employments.

I send you by Mr. Old my Works complete, bound in brown paper, and numbered according to the series in which I would have them published. With respect to the poem called *Truth*, it is *so* true that it can hardly fail of giving offence to an unenlightened reader. I think, therefore, that in order to obviate in some measure those prejudices that will naturally erect their bristles against it, an explanatory preface, such as you (and nobody so well as you) can furnish me with, will have every grace of propriety to recommend it. Or, if you are not averse to the task, and your avocations will allow you to undertake it, and if you think it would still be more proper, I should be glad to be indebted to you for the preface to the whole. I wish you, however, to consult your own judgement upon the occasion, and to engage in either of these works, or neither, just as your discretion guides you.

The observations contained in the Progress of Error, though, as you say, of general application, have yet

such an unlucky squint at the author of Thelyphthora, that they will be almost as sure to strike him in the sore place, as he will be to read the poem, if published with my name; and I would by no means wish to involve you in the resentment that I shall probably incur by those lines; which might be the consequence of our walking arm in arm into the public notice. For my own part I have my answer ready, if I should be called upon; but as you have corresponded with him upon the subject, and have closed that correspondence in as amicable a way as the subject of it would permit, you may perhaps think it would appear like a departure from the friendly moderation of your conduct, to give an open countenance and encouragement to a work in which he seems to be so freely treated. But after all there is no necessity for your name, though I should choose by all means to be honoured with it, if there be no unanswerable objection.—You will find the substituted passage in the Progress of Error, just where the ground was occupied by the reflections upon Mr. Madan's performance.

Mr. Hill's answer seems to have no fault but what it owes to a virtue. His great charity and candour have in my mind excluded from it that animation and energy, which even a good man might lawfully show when answering a book which could hardly fail to excite a little indignation. Mildness and meekness are not more plainly recommended in Scripture in some instances, than sharpness of reproof and severity in others.

I am very well satisfied with the commendation the

reviewers have bestowed upon Sir Airy. It is as much as I hoped for; and I question much whether they will speak so favourably of my next publication.

I have written a great deal to-day, which must be my excuse for an abrupt conclusion. Our love attends you both. We are in pretty good health; Mrs. Unwin indeed better than usual: and as to me, I ail nothing but the incurable ailment.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

Thanks for the cocoa-nut.

I send a cucumber, not of my own raising, and yet raised by me.

Solve this enigma, dark enough
To puzzle any brains
That are not downright puzzle-proof,
And eat it for your pains.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Monday, April 23, 1781.

HAVING not the least doubt of your ability to execute just such a preface as I should wish to see prefixed to my publication, and being convinced that you have no good foundation for those which you yourself entertain upon the subject, I neither withdraw my requisition, nor abate one jot of the earnestness with which I made it. I admit the delicacy of the occasion, but am far from apprehending that you will therefore find it difficult to succeed. You can draw a hair-stroke

where another man would make a blot as broad as a sixpence.

With respect to the Heathen and what I have said about them, the subject is of that kind which every man must settle for himself, and on which we can proceed no further than hypothesis and opinion will carry us. I was willing however to obviate an objection I foresaw, and to do it in a way not derogatory from the truth of the Gospel, yet at the same time as conciliatory as possible to the prejudices of the objector. After all, indeed, I see no medium: either we must suppose them lost, or if saved, saved by virtue of the only propitiation. They seem to me, on the principles of equity, to stand in much the same predicament, and to be entitled, (at least according to human apprehensions of justice,) to much the same allowance as Infants: both partakers of a sinful nature, and both unavoidably ignorant of the remedy. Infants I suppose universally saved, because impeccable; and the virtuous Heathen, having had no opportunity to sin against Revelation, and having made a conscientious use of the light of Nature, I should suppose saved too.—But I drop a subject on which I could say a good deal more, for two reasons; first, because I am writing a letter, and not an essay; and secondly, because after all I might write about it, I could come to no certain conclusion.

I once had thoughts of annexing a few smaller pieces to those I have sent you; but having only very few that I accounted worthy to bear them company, and those for the most part on subjects less calculated *for utility* than amusement, I changed my mind. If

hereafter I should accumulate a sufficient number of these *minutiæ* to make a miscellaneous volume, which is not impossible, I may perhaps collect and print them.

I am much obliged to you for the interest you take in the appearance of my Poems, and much pleased by the alacrity with which you do it. Your favourable opinion of them affords me a comfortable presage with respect to that of the public; for though I make allowances for your partiality to me and mine, because mine, yet I am sure you would not suffer me unadmonished to add myself to the multitude of insipid rhymers, with whose productions the world is already too much pestered.

It is worth while to send *you* a riddle, you make such a variety of guesses, and turn and tumble it about with such an industrious curiosity. The solution of that in question is—let me see; it requires some consideration to explain it, even though I made it. I raised the seed that produced the plant that produced the fruit, that produced the seed that produced the fruit I sent you. This latter seed I gave to the gardener of Terningham, who brought me the cucumber you mention. Thus you see I raised it—that is to say, I raised it virtually by having raised its progenitor; and yet I did not raise it, because the identical seed from which it grew was raised at a distance. You observe I did not speak rashly, when I spoke of it as dark enough to pose an Œdipus; and have no need to call your own sagacity in question for falling short of the discovery.

A report has prevailed at Olney that you are coming in a fortnight; but taking it for granted that you know best when you shall come, and that you will make us happy in the same knowledge as soon as you are possessed of it yourself, I did not venture to build any sanguine expectations upon it.

Mr. Madan seems to be in the condition of that gentleman of most candid memory, who though he might be confuted was resolved never to be convinced. I have at last read the second volume of his work, and had some hope that I should prevail with myself to read the first likewise. But endless repetitions, unwarranted conclusions, and wearisome declamations, conquered my perseverance, and obliged me to leave the task unfinished. He boasts in his Introduction that he has attended to a happy mixture of the *utile dulci*. The former I find not, and the latter so sparingly afforded as to be scarce perceptible. You told us, some time since, that his reasons for writing on such a subject were certainly known to a few. If you judge it not imprudent to communicate them by the post, we should be glad to know them too. You know that we are hermetically sealed, and that no secret is the less a secret for our participation of it. I began his book at the latter end, because the first part of it was engaged when I received the second; but I had not so good an appetite as a soldier of the Guards, who, I was informed when I lived in London, would for a small matter eat up a cat alive, beginning at her tail and finishing with her whiskers.

Mrs. Unwin sends her love. She is tolerably well,

and will rejoice to hear that her application in behalf of your nephew has succeeded. Not having lately heard from Stock, she is ignorant of what has passed.

My love to Mrs. Newton.

Yours, *ut semper*,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR SIR, April 25, 1781.

WHILE I thought of publishing only the four pieces already sent, I did not give myself the trouble to peruse with any attention what smaller poems I have by me. But on finding it necessary to make an addition, I have again looked them over, and am glad to find after an enquiry as critical as an author can be supposed to make into the merits of his own productions, that I am in possession of eight hundred lines that may safely, I hope, venture to show themselves in public. To these I would add those copies I translated from Vincent Bourne, but having no transcript of them myself, I must beg you to take the trouble either to send them hither, or to get them written out for me. The whole together will amount nearly to a thousand lines, and as I suppose Mr. Johnson will not allot more than one page to one piece, they will fill more paper than the same number of lines written in continuation, and upon the same subject. There are times when I cannot write, and the present is such a time; and were it not, I should yet prefer this method of swelling the volume, to that of filling the vacuity with one long-winded poem like the preceding.

A variety of measures on a variety of subjects will relieve both the mind and the ear, and may possibly prevent that weariness of which there might otherwise be no small danger.

I hope that what I said in my last has determined you to undertake the preface; in that case the gentleman you mentioned, (Mr. Foster,) must upon your walking out of the lines, march in to supply your place. I have no outline to send you, neither shall I have time for any thing but to transcribe, which I will do as fast as I can to be legible, and remit my labours to you by the first opportunity;—title-page and motto at the same time.

We are sorry that you have not heard from Stock, but hope, and have no doubt notwithstanding this silence, that the affair will be settled to your wish. I write in much haste, and have only to add my thanks for your negotiations, and our joint love to you both, with remembrance to all friends at Hoxton.

Yours, my dear Sir,

WM. COWPER.

I am at this time a member of the Inner Temple.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

May 1, 1781.

YOUR mother says I *must* write, and *must* admits of no apology; I might otherwise plead, that I have nothing to say, that I am weary, that I am dull, that *it would* be more convenient therefore for you, as well

as for myself, that I should let it alone; but all these pleas, and whatever pleas besides either disinclination, indolence, or necessity might suggest, are overruled, as they ought to be, the moment a lady adduces her irrefragable argument, *you must.* You have still however one comfort left, that what I must write, you may, or may not read, just as it shall please you; unless Lady Anne at your elbow should say, you *must* read it, and then like a true knight you will obey without looking out for a remedy.

I do not love to harp upon strings that, to say the least, are not so musical as one would wish. But you I know have many a time sacrificed your own feelings to those of others, and where an act of charity leads you, are not easily put out of your way. This consideration encourages me just to insinuate that your silence on the subject of a certain nomination is distressful to more than you would wish, in particular to the little boy whose clothes are outgrown and worn out; and to his mother, who is unwilling to furnish him with a new suit, having reason to suppose that the long blue petticoat would soon supersede it, if she should.

In the press, and speedily will be published, in one volume octavo, price three shillings, Poems, by William Cowper, of the Inner Temple, Esq. You may suppose, by the size of the publication, that the greatest part of them have been long kept secret, because you yourself have never seen them: but the truth is, that they are most of them, except what you have in your possession, the produce of the last winter. Two-thirds of the compilation will be occupied by four

pieces, the first of which sprung up in the month of December, and the last of them in the month of March. They contain, I suppose, in all, about two thousand and five hundred lines; are known, or to be known in due time, by the names of *Table Talk—The Progress of Error—Truth—Expostulation.* Mr. Newton writes a Preface, and Johnson is the publisher. The principal, I may say the only reason why I never mentioned to you, till now, an affair which I am just going to make known to all the world, (if *that* Mr. All-the-world should think it worth his knowing,) has been this; that till within these few days, I had not the honour to know it myself. This may seem strange, but it is true; for not knowing where to find underwriters who would choose to insure them; and not finding it convenient to a purse like mine, to run any hazard, even upon the credit of my own ingenuity, I was very much in doubt for some weeks, whether any bookseller would be willing to subject himself to an ambiguity, that might prove very expensive in case of a bad market. But Johnson has heroically set all peradventures at defiance, and takes the whole charge upon himself. So out I come. I shall be glad of my Translations from Vincent Bourne, in your next frank. My Muse will lay herself at your feet immediately on her first public appearance.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, May 9, 1781.

I AM in the press, and it is in vain to deny it. But how mysterious is the conveyance of intelligence from one end to the other of your great city!—Not many days since, except one man, and he but a little taller than yourself, all London was ignorant of it; for I do not suppose that the public prints have yet announced this most agreeable tidings, the title-page, which is the basis of the advertisement, having so lately reached the publisher: and now it is known to you, who live at least two miles distant from my confidant upon the occasion.

My labours are principally the production of the last winter; all indeed, except a few of the minor pieces. When I can find no other occupation, I think, and when I think, I am very apt to do it in rhyme. Hence it comes to pass that the season of the year which generally pinches off the flowers of poetry, unfolds mine, such as they are, and crowns me with a winter garland. In this respect therefore, I and my contemporary bards are by no means upon a par. They write when the delightful influences of fine weather, fine prospects, and a brisk motion of the animal spirits, make poetry almost the language of nature; and I, when icicles depend from all the leaves of the Parnassian laurel, and when a reasonable man would as little expect to succeed in verse, as to hear a blackbird whistle. This must be my apology to you for whatever want of fire and animation you may observe in what you will shortly have the perusal of. As to

the public, if they like me not, there is no remedy. A friend will weigh and consider all disadvantages, and make as large allowances as an author can wish, and larger perhaps than he has any right to expect; but not so the world at large; whatever they do not like, they will not by any apology be persuaded to forgive, and it would be in vain to tell *them*, that I wrote my verses in January, for they would immediately reply, "Why did not you write them in May?" A question that might puzzle a wiser head than we poets are generally blessed with.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 13, 1781.

WE thank you for the anecdote sent us in compliance with our desire. Added at the end of a certain treatise, it would operate as a powerful antidote to the erroneous opinion it inculcates, and sufficiently explain the mystery of a sensible man addicting himself to a silly enterprise, and vainly endeavouring to accomplish it by reasonings that would disgrace a boy.

You are not sorry I suppose that your correspondence with him is at an end; you might perhaps have easily secured the continuance of it had you been less explicit, but it must have been at the expense of that point of honour which a spiritual warrior of your rank and character, will upon no consideration abandon. A gentler reprehension, an air of pleasantry, or any disguise of your real sentiments whatever, would still *have left* room for what he would have called a friendly

intercourse. But your friendship for him has now produced the strongest proof of its sincerity; and though he is not able to bear it, the time may come, (it will be unhappy for him indeed if it never should,) when he will know how to value it and to thank you for it.

The rudeness of his answer,—I was going to give it a harsher character,—exceeds all that I could have thought it possible he could be provoked to treat you with, merely because you cannot see with his eyes, and have had the boldness to tell him so.

M. quarrels with N., for M. wrote a book,
And N. did not like it, which M. could not brook.
So he call'd him a bigot, a wrangler, a monk,
With as many hard names as would line a good trunk,
And set up his back, and claw'd like a cat,
But N. liked it never the better for that.
Now N. had a wife, and he wanted but one,
Which stuck in M.'s stomach as cross as a bone.
It has always been reckon'd a just cause of strife
For a man to make free with another man's wife;
But the strife is the strangest that ever was known,
If a man must be scolded for loving his own.

Mrs. Unwin rejoices that the nomination affair is at last accomplished, she accounts your thanks for it more than a sufficient recompense, and is sorry it is not in her power to give you and Mrs. Newton more important proofs of her regard.—I asked her what I should say, and she bade me say all this.

I am ready to wish that you may not yet have sent the Translations of Bourne to Johnson, because I find it necessary to put forth a new edition of the two last stanzas of the Cricket. One of them was disgraced

by a false rhyme, and the other was too long by two lines. By the way Mr. Unwin has sent me three of them, but the Glowworm and the Cantab he has not sent.

This last victory over the Americans will go near to verify my poetical prediction, and Sir Joshua will have nothing to do but to record the completion of a prophecy which is the more respectable, because when first delivered, it seemed so very improbable. Rebellion it should seem must soon be extinguished, crippled by defeat and destitute of resources, and extinction of the war will soon follow it. I have taken prudent care however to save my credit at all events, and having foretold both fair weather and foul, the former in the piece just alluded to, and the latter in Expostulation, fall back, fall edge, as they say, like the Newton-shepherds, my soothsaying is sure to be accomplished.

There is, I am afraid, a perverseness and persevering spirit of opposition to Mr. Scott, that will grieve you, though you will not suffer it to disturb your temper. Mr. Scott acts wisely, and takes no notice of it either in conversation with the people or in the pulpit.

The ducks could not be pulled, because it was necessary they should be killed on a Sunday.

Yours, my dear friend, and Mrs. Newton's,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 21, 1781.

I AM not so impatient to see myself in print, as to be at all disconcerted by the delay. I was sufficiently aware, that with Johnson's utmost despatch he would be too late, and that the summer, which is just at the door, would tread too close upon the heels of the publication. I had much rather therefore proceed leisurely as he advises, (if he will indeed go on to print at his leisure,) and so avail myself of the complete opportunity that winter will bring with it, than open my stall just when the Fair is over.

The case standing thus, and this leisurely proceeding being so favourable to my purpose, I have conceived a design to save you the trouble of revising the proofs, and that for two reasons, first, because your time is precious, and mine is not so; and secondly, because having written nothing of late that I do not retain *memoritèr*, it is impossible for the alteration of a word, or the least inaccuracy to escape me.

I mean therefore to furnish myself with London and country franks, and to desire Johnson to transmit the proofs to me.

It would have a strange appearance, and is hardly a supposable case, but for amusement sake we will endeavour to suppose it for a moment. A man (he must be a confirmed stoic) stands encompassed by a dozen others,—one tweaks his nose, one pinches his sides, one slaps his right cheek, and one his left; one treads upon his toes, one spits in his face, one thrusts

pins into the calves of his legs, and one kicks him on the breech; one raps the knuckles of one hand, one of the other; one sets a fool's cap upon his head, and another, a man of some wit and with a reasonable share of humour, sneers, laughs, and makes faces at him, while his associates are thus employed in tormenting him. The patient, (for patient he must needs be if he keeps his senses,) affects to be all the while perfectly at his ease, denies that any body touches him, calls them his dear friends, observes that it is a very fine day, and takes snuff.

Extravagant as this picture may seem, it bears I think some resemblance to Mr. Madan. He is or would seem to be insensible of the many smart strokes he receives from his antagonists; they are a parcel of insignificant wretches,—some of them indeed his very good friends, whose opposition to his book is rather an argument of their own bigotry or folly than any inconvenience to him; and as to the rest, whether they write, or the wind whistles, is a matter of the most absolute indifference. And yet, as in the case above delineated, the unhappy gentleman must undoubtedly suffer a great deal, so must the author of Thelyphthora, if the two clubs of learning and logic, and the stinging nettles of wit and humour can possibly make him feel. By the way we shall be glad if you can bring Mr. Barton's book with you.

Mrs. Unwin sends her love. We both wait for the day appointed with a pleasing sort of impatience, and comfort ourselves with the thought that though we cannot hasten its approach one moment, it will come,

and must come, and that the interval, let what will happen, and how long soever it may seem, can be but a fortnight. We mean if you are able to keep your assignation.

She will be obliged to Mrs. Newton if she will be so good as to bring with her six tooth brushes, a quarter of a pound of oystershell powder, and two pounds of the same bohea as before. We shall hope to see you at dinner on Saturday, and as much sooner as you please; we always dine at two.

Yours, my dear Sir, and Mrs. Newton's,

Con ogni rispetto affectuoso,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 23, 1781.

If a writer's friends have need of patience, how much more the writer! Your desire to see my muse in public, and mine to gratify you, must both suffer the mortification of delay. I expected that my trumpeter would have informed the world by this time of all that is needful for them to know upon such an occasion; and that an advertising blast, blown through every newspaper, would have said—"The poet is coming!"—But man, especially man that writes verse, is born to disappointments, as surely as printers and booksellers are born to be the most dilatory and tedious of all creatures. The plain English of this magnificent preamble is, that the season of publication is just elapsed, that the town is going into the country every

day, and that my book cannot appear till they return, that is to say, not till next winter.

This misfortune however comes not without its attendant advantage; I shall now have, what I should not otherwise have had, an opportunity to correct the press myself; no small advantage upon any occasion, but especially important, where poetry is concerned! A single erratum may knock out the brains of a whole passage, and that perhaps, which of all others the unfortunate poet is the most proud of. Add to this, that now and then there is to be found in a printing-house a presumptuous intermeddler, who will fancy himself a poet too, and what is still worse, a better than he that employs him. The consequence is, that with cobbling, and tinkering, and patching on here and there a shred of his own, he makes such a difference between the original and the copy, that an author cannot know his own work again. Now as I choose to be responsible for nobody's dulness but my own, I am a little comforted, when I reflect that it will be in my power to prevent all such impertinence; and yet not without your assistance. It will be quite necessary, that the correspondence between me and Johnson should be carried on without the expense of postage, because proof sheets would make double or treble letters, which expense, as in every instance it must occur twice, first when the packet is sent, and again when it is returned, would be rather inconvenient to me, who, as you perceive, am forced to live by my wits, and to him, who hopes to get a little matter no doubt by the same means. Half a dozen franks therefore to me, and

totidem to him, will be singularly acceptable, if you can, without feeling it in any respect a trouble, procure them for me.

My neckcloths being all worn out, I intend to wear stocks, but not unless they are more fashionable than the former. In that case, I shall be obliged to you if you will buy me a handsome stock-buckle, for a very little money; for twenty or twenty-five shillings perhaps a second-hand affair may be purchased that will make a figure at Olney.

I am much obliged to you for your offer to support me in a translation of Bourne. It is but seldom, however, and never except for my amusement, that I translate, because I find it disagreeable to work by another man's pattern; I should at least be sure to find it so in a business of any length. Again, *that* is epigrammatic and witty in Latin, which would be perfectly insipid in English; and a translator of Bourne would frequently find himself obliged to supply what is called the turn, which is in fact the most difficult, and the most expensive part of the whole composition, and could not perhaps, in many instances, be done with any tolerable success. If a Latin poem is neat, elegant, and musical, it is enough; but English readers are not so easily satisfied. To quote myself, you will find, in comparing the Jackdaw with the original, that I was obliged to sharpen a point which, though smart enough in the Latin, would, in English, have appeared as plain, and as blunt, as the tag of a lace. I love the memory of Vinny Bourne. I think him a better Latin poet than Tibullus, Propertius, Ausonius, or any of the writers in *his* way, except Ovid, and not at all

inferior to *him*. I love him too with a love of partiality, because he was usher of the fifth form at Westminster, when I passed through it. He was so good-natured, and so indolent, that I lost more than I got by him; for he made me as idle as himself. He was such a sloven, as if he had trusted to his genius as a cloak for every thing that could disgust you in his person; and indeed in his writings he has almost made amends for all. His humour is entirely original; he can speak of a magpie or a cat in terms so exquisitely appropriated to the character he draws, that one would suppose him animated by the spirit of the creature he describes. And with all this drollery there is a mixture of rational, and even religious reflection at times: and always an air of pleasantry, good-nature, and humanity, that makes him, in my mind, one of the most amiable writers in the world. It is not common to meet with an author who can make you smile, and yet at nobody's expense; who is always entertaining, and yet always harmless; and who, though always elegant, and classical to a degree not always found even in the classics themselves, charms more by the simplicity and playfulness of his ideas, than by the neatness and purity of his verse; yet such was poor Vinny. I remember seeing the Duke of Richmond set fire to his greasy locks, and box his ears to put it out again.

I am delighted with your project, but not with the view I have of its success. If the world would form its opinion of the clerical character at large, from yours in particular, I have no doubt but the event would be as prosperous as you could wish. But I suppose there

is not a member of either house who does not see within the circle of his own acquaintance, a minister, perhaps many ministers, whose integrity would contribute but little to the effect of such a bill. Here are seven or eight in the neighbourhood of Olney, who have shaken hands with sobriety, and who would rather suppress the church, were it not for the emoluments annexed, than discourage the sale of strong beer in a single instance. Were I myself in Parliament, I am not sure that I could favour your scheme; are there not to be found within five miles of almost every neighbourhood, parsons who would purchase well accustomed public-houses, because they could secure them a license, and patronize them when they had done? I think no penalty would prevent the abuse, on account of the difficulty of proof, and that no ingenuity could guard against all the possible abuses. To sum up all in few words, the generality of the clergy, especially within these last twenty or thirty years, have worn their circingles so loose, that I verily believe no measure that proposed an accession of privilege to an order which the laity retain but little respect for, would meet with the countenance of the legislature. You will do me the justice to suppose that I do not say these things to gratify a splenetic humour or a censorious turn of mind; far from it,—it may add, perhaps, to the severity of the foregoing observations to assert, but if it does, I cannot help asserting, that I verily believe them to be founded upon fact, and that I am sure, partly from my own knowledge, and partly from the report of those whose veracity I can depend upon, that in this part of the world at least,

many of the most profligate characters are the very men to whom the morals, and even the souls of others are entrusted; and I cannot suppose that the diocese of Lincoln, or this part of it in particular, is more unfortunate in that respect than the rest of the kingdom.

Since I began to write long poems, I seem to turn up my nose at the idea of a short one. I have lately entered upon one, which, if ever finished, cannot easily be comprised in much less than a thousand lines! But this must make part of a second publication, and be accompanied, in due time, by others not yet thought of; for it seems (which I did not know till the bookseller had occasion to tell me so) that single pieces stand no chance, and that nothing less than a volume will go down. You yourself afford me a proof of the certainty of this intelligence, by sending me franks which nothing less than a volume can fill. I have accordingly sent you one, but am obliged to add, that had the wind been in any other point of the compass, or, blowing as it does from the east, had it been less boisterous, you must have been contented with a much shorter letter, but the abridgement of every other occupation is very favourable to that of writing.

I am glad I did not expect to hear from you by this post, for the boy has lost the bag in which your letter must have been enclosed;—another reason for my prolixity!

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May, 1781.

I BELIEVE I never give you trouble without feeling more than I give; so much by way of preface and apology.

Thus stands the case. Johnson has begun to print, and Mr. Newton has already corrected the first sheet. This unexpected despatch makes it necessary for me to furnish myself with means of communication, viz. the franks, as soon as may be. There are reasons (I believe I mentioned them in my last) why I choose to revise the proofs myself:—nevertheless, if your delicacy must suffer the puncture of a pin's point in procuring the franks for me, I release you entirely from the task; you are as free as if I had never mentioned them. But you will oblige me by a speedy answer upon this subject, because it is expedient that the printer should know to whom he is to send his copy; and when the press is once set, those humble servants of the poets are rather impatient of any delay, because the types are wanted for other authors, who are equally in haste to be born.

This fine weather I suppose sets you on horseback, and allures the ladies into the garden. If I was at Stock, I should be of their party; and while they sat knotting or netting in the shade, should comfort myself with the thought, that I had not a beast under me, whose walk would seem tedious, whose trot would jumble me, and whose gallop might throw me into a ditch. What nature expressly designed me for I have never been able to conjecture; I seem to myself so

universally disqualified for the common and customary occupations and amusements of mankind. When I was a boy, I excelled at cricket and foot-ball, but the fame I acquired by achievements in that way is long since forgotten, and I do not know that I have made a figure in any thing since. I am sure however that she did not design me for a horseman; and that, if all men were of my mind, there would be an end of all jockeyship for ever. I am rather straitened in time, and not very rich in materials, therefore, with our joint love to you all, conclude myself,

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 28, 1781.

I AM much obliged to you for the pains you have taken with my *Table Talk*, and wish that my *viva voce* Table Talk could repay you for the trouble you have had with the written one.

I am quite surprised at Johnson's diligence, and began to wish, while reading your account of it, that I had left the business of correction in your hands; but presently recollecting that it is a tedious troublesome employment, and fit only for the author himself to be burthened with, I relapsed into my former sentiment. My franks are not yet ready, but I shall lose no time in procuring them if they are to be got. I enclose a line to Johnson, to tell him that if in the mean time, and while you are absent from town, another parcel of the *proof* should be ready for revisal, I wish him to send

it hither by the diligence. I am as well convinced of the accuracy and exactness with which you would perform the task, as it is possible for me to be of my own, and if I can obtain no franks shall after all have recourse to your assistance.

The season is wonderfully improved within this day or two; and if these cloudless skies are continued to us, or rather if the cold winds do not set in again, promises you a pleasant excursion, as far, at least, as the weather can conduce to make it such. You seldom complain of too much sunshine, and if you are prepared for a heat somewhat like that of Africa, the south walk in our long garden will exactly suit you. Reflected from the gravel, and from the walls, and beating upon your head at the same time, it may possibly make you wish you could enjoy for an hour or two that immensity of shade afforded by the gigantic trees still growing in the land of your captivity. If you could spend a day now and then in those forests, and return with a wish to England, it would be no small addition to the number of your best pleasures. But *pennæ non homini datæ*. The time will come perhaps, (but death must come first,) when you will be able to visit them without either danger, trouble, or expense; and when the contemplation of those well-remembered scenes will awaken in you emotions of gratitude and praise surpassing all you could possibly sustain at present. In this sense, I suppose, there is a heaven upon earth at all times, and that the disembodied spirit may find a peculiar joy arising from the contemplation of those places it was formerly conversant with, and so far, at least, be reconciled to

a world it was once so weary of, as to use it in the delightful way of thankful recollection.

Miss Catlett must not think of any other lodging than we can without any inconvenience, as we shall with all possible pleasure, furnish her with. We can each of us say,—that is, I can say it in Latin, and Mrs. Unwin in English,—*Nihil tui à me alienum puto.* She shall have a great bed and a great room, and we shall have the chamber we always occupy when we have company, and should certainly occupy, if she was not of the party. This state of the case leaves no room for the least objection; we desire therefore that you will give our love to her, tell her we shall expect her, and that she will be but half as welcome to us if she sleeps any where else.

Having two more letters to write, I find myself obliged to shorten this; so once more wishing you a good journey, and ourselves the happiness of receiving you in good health and spirits,

I remain

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 5, 1781.

If the old adage be true, that "he gives twice, who gives speedily," it is equally true, that he who not only uses expedition in giving, but gives more than was asked, gives thrice at least. Such is the style in which Mr. Smith confers a favour. He has not only sent me franks to Johnson, but, under another

cover, has added six to you. These last, for aught that appears by your letter, he threw in of his own mere bounty. I beg that my share of thanks may not be wanting on this occasion, and that when you write to him next you will assure him of the sense I have of the obligation, which is the more flattering, as it includes a proof of his predilection in favour of the poems his franks are destined to enclose. May they not forfeit his good opinion hereafter, nor yours, to whom I hold myself indebted in the first place, and who have equally given me credit for their deservings! Your mother says, that although there are passages in them containing opinions which will not be universally subscribed to, the world will at least allow—what my great modesty will not permit me to subjoin. I have the highest opinion of her judgement, and know, by having experienced the soundness of them, that her observations are always worthy of attention and regard. Yet, strange as it may seem, I do not feel the vanity of an author, when she commends me;—but I feel something better, a spur to my diligence, and a cordial to my spirits, both together animating me to deserve, at least not to fall short of her expectations. For I verily believe, if my dulness should earn me the character of a dunce, the censure would affect her more than me; not that I am insensible of the value of a good name, either as a man or an author. Without an ambition to attain it, it is absolutely unattainable under either of those descriptions. But my life having been in many respects a series of mortifications and disappointments, I am become less apprehensive and

impressible perhaps in some points, than I should otherwise have been; and though I should be exquisitely sorry to disgrace my friends, could endure my own share of the affliction with a reasonable measure of tranquillity.

These seasonable showers have poured floods upon all the neighbouring parishes, but have passed us by. My garden languishes, and, what is worse, the fields too languish, and the upland grass is burnt. These discriminations are not fortuitous. But if they are providential, what do they import? I can only answer, as a friend of mine once answered a mathematical question in the schools—"*Prorsùs nescio.*" Perhaps it is, that men, who will not believe what they cannot understand, may learn the folly of their conduct, while their very senses are made to witness against them; and themselves in the course of Providence become the subjects of a thousand dispensations they cannot explain. But the end is never answered. The lesson is inculcated indeed frequently enough, but nobody learns it. Well. Instruction vouchsafed in vain is (I suppose) a debt to be accounted for hereafter. You must understand this to be a soliloquy. I wrote my thoughts without recollecting that I was writing a letter, and to you.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 24, 1781.

THE letter you withheld so long, lest it should give me pain, gave me pleasure. Horace says, the poets are a waspish race; and from my own experience of the temper of two or three, with whom I was formerly connected, I can readily subscribe to the character he gives them. But for my own part, I have never yet felt that excessive irritability, which some writers discover, when a friend, in the words of Pope,

"Just hints a fault, or hesitates dislike."

Least of all would I give way to such an unseasonable ebullition, merely because a civil question is proposed to me with much gentleness, and by a man whose concern for my credit and character I verily believe to be sincere. I reply therefore, not peevishly, but with a sense of the kindness of your intentions, that I hope you may make yourself very easy on a subject, that I can perceive has occasioned you some solicitude. When I wrote the poem called *Truth*, by which is intended Religious Truth, it was indispensably necessary that I should set forth that doctrine which I know to be true, and that I should pass what I understood to be a just censure upon opinions and persuasions that differ from, or stand in direct opposition to it; because, though some errors may be innocent, and even religious errors are not always pernicious, yet in a case where the faith and hope of a Christian are concerned, they must necessarily be destructive; and because, neglecting this, I should have betrayed my

subject; either suppressing what, in my judgement, is of the last importance, or giving countenance, by a timid silence, to the very evils it was my design to combat. That you may understand me better, I will subjoin—that I wrote that poem on purpose to inculcate the eleemosynary character of the Gospel, as a dispensation of mercy, in the most absolute sense of the word, to the exclusion of all claims of merit on the part of the receiver; consequently to set the brand of invalidity upon the plea of works, and to discover, upon scriptural ground, the absurdity of that notion, which includes a solecism in the very terms of it, that man, by repentance and good works, may deserve the mercy of his Maker: I call it a solecism, because mercy deserved ceases to be mercy, and must take the name of justice. This is the opinion which I said, in my last, the world would not acquiesce in; but except this, I do not recollect that I have introduced a syllable into any of my pieces, that they can possibly object to; and even this I have endeavoured to deliver from doctrinal dryness, by as many pretty things, in the way of trinket and plaything, as I could muster upon the subject. So that if I have rubbed their gums, I have taken care to do it with a coral, and even that coral embellished by the ribband to which it is tied, and recommended by the tinkling of all the bells I could contrive to annex to it.

You need not trouble yourself to call on Johnson; being perfectly acquainted with the progress of the business, I am able to satisfy your curiosity myself. The post before the last I returned to him the second *sheet of Table Talk*, which he had sent me for cor-

rection, and which stands foremost in the volume. The delay has enabled me to add a piece of considerable length, which, but for the delay, would not have made its appearance upon this occasion; it answers to the name of Hope.

Your Independent gardener's excuses for his breach of the Sabbath, are in my mind paltry, and all put together, amount to no more than this,—that I choose to turn a penny when I can, and am determined that the sanctity of the day shall never interfere with a concern of so much greater importance. The barber and hair-dresser who officiates for me, would not wait upon the King himself on a Sunday, though he could easily make apologies more plausible than any adduced by the old man you mention, were he disposed to trespass against his duty and his conscience.

I remember a line in the Odyssey, which, literally translated, imports that there is nothing in the world more impudent than the belly. But had Homer met with an instance of modesty like yours, he would either have suppressed that observation, or at least have qualified it with an exception. I hope that, for the future, Mrs. Unwin will never suffer you to go to London, without putting some victuals in your pocket; for what a strange article would it make in a newspaper, that a tall, well-dressed gentleman, by his appearance a clergyman, and with a purse of gold in his pocket, was found starved to death in the street! How would it puzzle conjecture, to account for such a phenomenon! Some would suppose that you had been kidnapped, like Betty Canning, of hungry memory; others would say, the gentleman was a Methodist, and

had practised a rigorous self-denial, which had unhappily proved too hard for his constitution; but I will venture to say that nobody would divine the real cause, or suspect for a moment, that your modesty had occasioned the tragedy in question. By the way, is it not possible, that the spareness and slenderness of your person may be owing to the same cause? for surely it is reasonable to suspect, that the bashfulness which could prevail against you, on so trying an occasion, may be equally prevalent on others. I remember having been told by Colman, that when he once dined with Garrick, he repeatedly pressed him to eat more of a certain dish, that he was known to be particularly fond of; Colman as often refused, and at last declared he could not: "But could not you," says Garrick, "if you was in a dark closet by yourself?" The same question might perhaps be put to you, with as much, or more propriety; and therefore I recommend it to you, either to furnish yourself with a little more assurance, or always to eat in the dark.

We sympathize with Mrs. Unwin; and if it will be any comfort to her to know it, can assure her, that a lady in our neighbourhood is always, on such occasions, the most miserable of all things, and yet escapes with great facility through all the dangers of her state.

Yours, *ut semper*,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND, July 12, 1781.

I AM going to send, what when you have read, you may scratch your head, and say, I suppose, there's nobody knows, whether what I have got, be verse or not: by the tune and the time, it ought to be rhyme; but if it be, did you ever see, of late or of yore, such a ditty before? The thought did occur, to me and to her, as Madam and I, did walk and not fly, over hills and dales, with spreading sails, before it was dark, to Weston Park.

The news at *Oney* is little or noney, but such as it is, I send it, viz. Poor Mr. Peace cannot yet cease, addling his head with what you said, and has left parish-church quite in the lurch, having almost swore to go there no more.

Page and his wife, that made such a strife, we met them twain in Dog Lane; we gave them the wall, and that was all. For Mr. Scott, we have seen him not, except as he pass'd, in a wonderful haste, to see a friend in Silver End. Mrs. Jones proposes, ere July closes, that she and her sister, and her Jones Mister, and we that are here, our course shall steer, to dine in the Spinney; but for a guinea, if the weather should hold, so hot and so cold, we had better by far stay where we are. For the grass there grows, while nobody mows, (which is very wrong,) so rank and long, that so to speak, 'tis at least a week, if it happens to rain, ere it dries again.

I have writ Charity, not for popularity, but as well

as I could, in hopes to do good; and if the Reviewer should say "to be sure, the gentleman's Muse, wears Methodist shoes; you may know by her pace, and talk about grace, that she and her bard have little regard, for the taste and fashions, and ruling passions, and hoidening play, of the modern day; and though she assume a borrowed plume, and now and then wear a tittering air, 'tis only her plan, to catch if she can, the giddy and gay, as they go that way, by a production, on a new construction. She has baited her trap in hopes to snap all that may come, with a sugar-plum." ——His opinion in this, will not be amiss; 'tis what I intend, my principal end; and if I succeed, and folks should read, till a few are brought to a serious thought, I shall think I am paid, for all I have said, and all I have done, though I have run, many a time, after a rhyme, as far as from hence, to the end of my sense, and by hook or crook, write another book, if I live and am here, another year.

I have heard before, of a room with a floor, laid upon springs, and such like things, with so much art, in every part, that when you went in, you was forced to begin a minuet pace, with an air and a grace, swimming about, now in and now out, with a deal of state, in a figure of eight, without pipe or string, or any such thing; and now I have writ, in a rhyming fit, what will make you dance, and as you advance, will keep you still, though against your will, dancing away, alert and gay, till you come to an end of what I have penn'd; which that you may do, ere Madam and you are quite worn out with jigging about, I take my leave, and here

you receive a bow profound, down to the ground, from your humble me—

W. C.

P. S. When I concluded, doubtless you did think me right, as well you might, in saying what I said of Scott; and then it was true, but now it is due, to him to note, that since I wrote, himself and he has visited we[1].

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 22, 1781.

I AM sensible of your difficulties in finding opportunities to write; and therefore, though always desirous and sometimes impatient to hear from you, am never peevish when I am disappointed. We thank you for the letters. The noble Divine is sensible though angry, and the Divine Captain always consistent with himself. What you relate of the unhappy Epsomite is truly shocking; when men cannot find the true remedy they often have recourse to one that is worse than the disease, and a worse than he has found, if the fact be such, it is not in the power of quackery to recommend. How wonderful! that a man can suppose himself employed under God's blessing as a discoverer of truth, while he himself is entangled in the worst of errors, a practical departure from it. If a traveller were lost

[1] This letter was first printed entire in the Memoir of Cowper, prefixed to the edition of his poems among the Aldine Poets; the most judicious memoir and the best arranged edition that has yet appeared.

in a labyrinth and in the course of his wanderings should stumble upon a vessel of intoxicating liquor, he could hardly do worse than drink it, or more effectually insure his own destruction.

Johnson having begun to print, has given me some sort of security for his perseverance; else, the tardiness of his operations would almost tempt me to despair of the end. He has, indeed, time enough before him; but that very circumstance is sometimes a snare, and gives occasion to delays that cannot be remedied. Witness the hare in the fable, who fell asleep in the midst of the race, and waked not till the tortoise had won the prize.

Taking it for granted that the new marriage-bill would pass, I took occasion, in the Address to Liberty, to celebrate the joyful æra; but in doing so afforded another proof that poets are not always prophets, for the House of Lords have thrown it out. I am, however, provided with four lines to fill up the gap, which I suppose it will be time enough to insert when the copy is sent down. I am in the middle of an affair called *Conversation*, which, as *Table Talk* serves in the present volume by way of introductory fiddle to the band that follows, I design shall perform the same office in a second.

Sic brevi fortes jaculamur ævo.

Our excursion to the Spinnie, which I mentioned in the hop o' my thumb lines I sent you, took place yesterday. The weather was just such as it would have been if we had had the choice of it; perhaps better; *for* of all things in the world we find it sometimes

most difficult to please ourselves. We dined in the root-house. Our great wheelbarrow, which may be called a first rate in its kind, conveyed all our stores, and afterwards, with the assistance of a board laid over it, made us a very good table. We set off at one, and were at home again soon after eight. I never made one in a party of pleasure that answered so well. We separated before we grew weary of each other, which is a happiness seldom enjoyed upon such occasions; we were seven in company, including Hannah, who, though highly delighted with her jaunt, was not at all more pleased than her elders. She is as much delighted to-day with the acquisition of a sister born last night, but whether the rest of that noble family will have equal cause to rejoice in the event, is uncertain. Should she be followed by a troop, unless they practise Dean Swift's recommended method for the maintenance of the poor, it is not easy to say where they will find victuals, certainly not at Olney.

You cannot always find time to write, and I cannot always write a great deal; not for want of time, but for want of something equally requisite; perhaps materials, perhaps spirits, or perhaps more frequently for want of ability to overcome an indolence that I have sometimes heard even you complain of.

I beg you will remember me to Mrs. Cowper. We are very sorry to hear of Mrs. Newton's indisposition. Mr. Wright, who called here three times before he could find me at home, informed me, the day before yesterday, that poor Lord Dartmouth grows worse. His account of him is indeed a most unfavourable one.

Thanks for the cocoa nuts and the slide. Mrs. Un-

win joins love to both. The summer being so far advanced

She and her sublimity
Will do without dimity.

Yours, my dear Sir, and Mrs. Newton's,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 29, 1781.

HAVING given the case you laid before me in your last all due consideration, I proceed to answer it; and in order to clear my way, shall, in the first place, set down my sense of those passages in Scripture which, on a hasty perusal, seem to clash with the opinion I am going to give—"If a man smite one cheek, turn the other"—"If he take thy cloak, let him take thy coat also." That is, I suppose, rather than on a vindictive principle avail yourself of that remedy the law allows you, in the way of retaliation, for that was the subject immediately under the discussion of the speaker. Nothing is so contrary to the genius of the Gospel, as the gratification of resentment and revenge; but I cannot easily persuade myself to think, that the author of that dispensation could possibly advise his followers to consult their own peace at the expense of the peace of society, or inculcate a universal abstinence from the use of lawful remedies, to the encouragement of injury and oppression.

St. Paul again seems to condemn the practice of going to law, "Why do ye not rather suffer wrong?"

&c. But if we look again, we shall find that a litigious temper had obtained, and was prevalent among the professors of the day. This he condemned, and with good reason; it was unseemly to the last degree, that the disciples of the Prince of Peace should worry and vex each other with injurious treatment, and unnecessary disputes, to the scandal of their religion in the eyes of the heathen. But surely he did not mean any more than his Master, in the place above alluded to, that the most harmless members of society should receive no advantage of its laws, or should be the only persons in the world who should derive no benefit from those institutions, without which society cannot subsist. Neither of them could mean to throw down the pale of property, and to lay the Christian part of the world open, throughout all ages, to the incursions of unlimited violence and wrong.

By this time you are sufficiently aware, that I think you have an indisputable right to recover at law what is so dishonestly withheld from you. The fellow, I suppose, has discernment enough to see a difference between you and the generality of the clergy, and cunning enough to conceive the purpose of turning your meekness and forbearance to good account, and of coining them into hard cash, which he means to put in his pocket. But I would disappoint him, and show him, that though a Christian is not to be quarrelsome, he is not to be crushed; and that though he is but a worm before God, he is not such a worm as every selfish unprincipled wretch may tread upon at his pleasure.

I lately heard a story from a lady, who has spent

many years of her life in France, somewhat to the present purpose. An Abbé, universally esteemed for his piety, and especially for the meekness of his manners, had yet undesignedly given some offence to a shabby fellow in his parish. The man, concluding he might do as he pleased with so forgiving and gentle a character, struck him on one cheek, and bade him turn the other. The good man did so, and when he had received the two slaps, which he thought himself obliged to submit to, turned again, and beat him soundly. I do not wish to see you follow the French gentleman's example, but I believe nobody that has heard the story condemns him much for the spirit he showed upon the occasion.

I had the relation from Lady Austen, sister to Mrs. Jones, wife of the minister at Clifton. She is a most agreeable woman, and has fallen in love with your mother and me; insomuch, that I do not know but she may settle at Olney. Yesterday se'nnight we all dined together in the *Spinnie*—a most delightful retirement, belonging to Mrs. Throckmorton of Weston. Lady Austen's lackey, and a lad that waits on me in the garden, drove a wheelbarrow full of eatables and drinkables to the scene of our *Fête Champêtre*. A board laid over the top of the wheelbarrow served us for a table; our dining-room was a root-house lined with moss and ivy. At six o'clock, the servants, who had dined under a great elm upon the ground, at a little distance, boiled the kettle, and the said wheelbarrow served us for a tea-table. We then took a walk into the wilderness, about half a mile off, and were at home again a little after eight, having spent

the day together from noon till evening without one cross occurrence, or the least weariness of each other. A happiness few parties of pleasure can boast of.

Yours, with our joint love,

W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

DEAR MADAM, Aug. 1781.

THOUGH much obliged to you for the favour of your last, and ready enough to acknowledge the debt, the present, however, is not a day in which I should have chosen to pay it. A dejection of mind, which perhaps may be removed by to-morrow, rather disqualifies me for writing,—a business I would always perform in good spirits, because melancholy is catching, especially where there is much sympathy to assist the contagion. But certain poultry, which I understand are about to pay their respects to you, have advertised for an agreeable companion, and I find myself obliged to embrace the opportunity of going to town with them in that capacity.

I thank you for your little abridgment of my family's history. Like every thing that relates to the present world, in which there seems to be nearly an equal mixture of the lamentable and ridiculous, it affords both occasion to laugh and to cry. In this single instance of my uncle, I can see cause for both. He trembles upon the verge of fourscore: a white hat with a yellow lining is no indication of wisdom suitable to so great an age; he can go but one step farther in the road of impropriety, and direct his executor to

bury him in it. He is a very little man, and had he lined his hat with pink instead of yellow, might have been gathered by a natural mistake for a mushroom, and sent off in a basket.

While the world lasts, fashion will continue to lead it by the nose. And, after all, what can fashion do for its most obsequious followers? It can ring the changes upon the same things, and it can do no more. Whether our hats be white or black, our caps high or low,—whether we wear two watches or one, is of little consequence. There is indeed an appearance of variety; but the folly and vanity that dictates and adopts the change, are invariably the same. When the fashions of a particular period appear more reasonable than those of the preceding, it is not because the world is grown more reasonable than it was; but because, in a course of perpetual changes, some of them must sometimes happen to be for the better. Neither do I suppose the preposterous customs that prevail at present, a proof of its greater folly. In a few years, perhaps next year, the fine gentleman will shut up his umbrella, and give it to his sister, filling his hand with a crab-tree cudgel instead of it: and when he has done so, will he be wiser than now? By no means. The love of change will have betrayed him into a propriety, which, in reality, he has no taste for, all his merit on the occasion amounting to no more than this—that, being weary of one plaything, he has taken up another.

In a note I received from Johnson last week, he expresses a wish that my pen may be still employed. Supposing it possible that he would yet be glad to

swell the volume, I have given him an order to draw upon me for eight hundred lines, if he chooses it; *Conversation*, a piece which I think I mentioned in my last to Mr. Newton, being finished. If Johnson sends for it, I shall transcribe it as soon as I can, and transmit it to Charles Square. Mr. Newton will take the trouble to forward it to the press. It is not a dialogue, as the title would lead you to surmise; nor does it bear the least resemblance to *Table Talk*, except that it is serio-comic, like all the rest. My design in it is to convince the world that they make but an indifferent use of their tongues, considering the intention of Providence when he endued them with the faculty of speech; to point out the abuses, which is the jocular part of the business, and to prescribe the remedy, which is the grave and sober.

We felt ourselves not the less obliged to you for the cocoa-nuts, though they were good for nothing. They contained nothing but a putrid liquor, with a round white lump, which in taste and substance much resembled tallow, and was of the size of a small walnut. Nor am I the less indebted to your kindness for the fish, though none is yet come. Mrs. Unwin does not forget the eggs, but while the harvest continues puddings are in such request, that the farmers will not part with them.

Our joint love to both, and to Miss Catlett, if at home. Sir's letter, for which I thank him, shall have an answer as soon as possible.

Yours, dear madam,
Most affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Aug. 25, 1781.

By Johnson's last note (for I have received a packet from him since I wrote last to you) I am ready to suspect that you have seen him, and endeavoured to quicken his proceedings. His assurance of greater expedition leads me to think so. I know little of booksellers and printers, but have heard from others that they are the most dilatory of all people; otherwise, I am not in a hurry, nor would be so troublesome: but am obliged to you nevertheless for your interference, if his promised alacrity be owing to any spur that you have given him. He chooses to add *Conversation* to the rest, and says he will give me notice when he is ready for it; but I shall send it to *you* by the first opportune conveyance, and beg you to deliver it over to him. He wishes me not to be afraid of making the volume too large; by which expression I suppose he means, that if I had still another piece, there would be room for it. At present I have not, but am in the way to produce another, *faveat modò Musa.* I have already begun and proceeded a little way in a poem called *Retirement.* My view in choosing that subject is to direct to the proper use of the opportunities it affords for the cultivation of a man's best interests; to censure the vices and the follies which people carry with them into their retreats, where they make no other use of their leisure than to gratify themselves with the indulgence of their favourite appetites, and to pay themselves, by a life of pleasure, for a life of business. In conclusion, I would enlarge upon the

happiness of that state, when discreetly enjoyed and religiously improved. But all this is, at present, in embryo. I generally despair of my progress when I begin; but, if, like my travelling 'squire, I should kindle as I go, this likewise may make a part of the volume, for I have time enough before me.

Susan Roberts has been supposed dying for some time, was speechless for a week, then grew better, was seized with violent convulsions, and is again grown better. Mr. Scott is recovered, though when we paid him our last morning visit we found him a little disconcerted by the brutality and profaneness of a drunken fellow whom he had just been yoking with a pregnant lady. The church was filled with idle folks upon the occasion, who could not be persuaded to behave with any degree of decency or decorum, and the wretch himself was as insolent as ignorance and strong drink could make him.

I forgot to mention that Johnson uses the discretion my poetship has allowed him, with much discernment. He has suggested several alterations, or rather marked several defective passages, which I have corrected, much to the advantage of the poems. In the last sheet he sent me, he noted three such, all which I have reduced into better order. In the foregoing sheet, I assented to his criticisms in some instances, and chose to abide by the original expression in others. Thus we jog on together comfortably enough; and perhaps it would be as well for authors in general, if their booksellers, when men of some taste, were allowed, though not to tinker the work themselves,

yet to point out the flaws, and humbly to recommend an improvement.

The embargo I would have laid upon the present of fish reached you, I find, too late, and we are now to return our thanks for three pair of fine soles, on which we feasted noon and night: but I beg that said embargo may have its effect in future; and that Mrs. Newton will not think of sending more till the price is fallen. Once more love, thanks, and adieu!

Yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, August 25, 1781.

We rejoice with you sincerely in the birth of another son, and in the prospect you have of Mrs. Unwin's recovery; may your three children, and the next three, when they shall make their appearance, prove so many blessings to their parents, and make you wish that you had twice the number. But what made you expect daily that you should hear from me? Letter for letter is the law of all correspondence whatsoever, and because I wrote last, I have indulged myself for some time in expectation of a sheet from you. Not that I govern myself entirely by the punctilio of reciprocation, but having been pretty much occupied of late, I was not sorry to find myself at liberty to exercise my discretion, and furnished with a good excuse if I chose to be silent.

I expected, as you remember, to have been published

last spring, and was disappointed. The delay has afforded me an opportunity to increase the quantity of my publication by about a third; and if my muse has not forsaken me, which I rather suspect to be the case, may possibly yet add to it. I have a subject in hand, which promises me a great abundance of poetical matter, but which, for want of a something I am not able to describe, I cannot at present proceed with. The name of it is "*Retirement*," and my purpose, to recommend the proper improvement of it, to set forth the requisites for that end, and to enlarge upon the happiness of that state of life, when managed as it ought to be. In the course of my journey through this ample theme, I should wish to touch upon the characters, the deficiences, and the mistakes of thousands, who enter on a scene of retirement, unqualified for it in every respect, and with such designs as have no tendency to promote either their own happiness or that of others. But as I have told you before, there are times, when I am no more a poet than I am a mathematician; and when such a time occurs, I always think it better to give up the point, than to labour it in vain. I shall yet again be obliged to trouble you for franks; the addition of three thousand lines, or near that number, having occasioned a demand which I did not always foresee: but your obliging friend, and your obliging self, having allowed me the liberty of application, I make it without apology.

The solitude, or rather the duality of our condition at Olney, seems drawing to a conclusion. You have not forgot, perhaps, that the building we inhabit consists of two mansions. And because you have only

seen the inside of that part of it which is in our occupation, I therefore inform you, that the other end of it is by far the most superb, as well as the most commodious. Lady Austen has seen it, has set her heart upon it, is going to fit it up and furnish it, and if she can get rid of the remaining two years of the lease of her London house, will probably enter upon it in a twelvemonth. You will be pleased with this intelligence, because I have already told you, that she is a woman perfectly well bred, sensible, and in every respect agreeable; and above all, because she loves your mother dearly. It has in my eyes, (and I doubt not it will have the same in yours,) strong marks of providential interposition. A female friend, and one who bids fair to prove herself worthy of the appellation, comes, recommended by a variety of considerations, to such a place as Olney. Since Mr. Newton went, and till this lady came, there was not in the kingdom a retirement more absolutely such than ours. We did not want company, but when it came, we found it agreeable. A person that has seen much of the world, and understands it well, has high spirits, a lively fancy, and great readiness of conversation, introduces a sprightliness into such a scene as this, which, if it was peaceful before, is not the worse for being a little enlivened. In case of illness too, to which all are liable, it was rather a gloomy prospect, if we allowed ourselves to advert to it, that there was hardly a woman in the place from whom it would have been reasonable to have expected either comfort or assistance. The present curate's wife is a valuable person, *but has* a family of her own, and though a neighbour,

is not a very near one. But if this plan is effected' we shall be in a manner one family, and I suppose never pass a day without some intercourse with each other.

Your mother sends her warm affections, and welcomes into the world the new-born William.

Yours,
My dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 26, 1781.

I MAY, I suppose, congratulate you on your safe arrival at Brighthelmstone; and am the better pleased with your design to close the summer there, because I am acquainted with the place, and, by the assistance of fancy, can without much difficulty join myself to the party, and partake with you in your amusements and excursions. It happened singularly enough, that just before I received your last, in which you apprize me of your intended journey, I had been writing upon the subject, having found occasion towards the close of my last poem, called *Retirement*, to take some notice of the modern passion for sea-side entertainments, and to direct to the means by which they might be made useful as well as agreeable. I think with you, that the most magnificent object under heaven is the great deep; and cannot but feel an unpolite species of astonishment, when I consider the multitudes that view it without emotion, and even without reflection. In all its various forms, it is an object of all others the most

suited to affect us with lasting impressions of the awful Power that created and controls it. I am the less inclined to think this negligence excusable, because, at a time of life when I gave as little attention to religious subjects as almost any man, I yet remember that the waves would preach to me, and that in the midst of dissipation I had an ear to hear them. One of Shakspeare's characters says,—"I am never merry when I hear sweet music." The same effect that harmony seems to have had upon him, I have experienced from the sight and sound of the ocean, which have often composed my thoughts into a melancholy not unpleasing, nor without its use. So much for *Signor Nettuno*.

Lady Austen goes to London this day se'nnight. We have told her that you shall visit her; which is an enterprise you may engage in with the more alacrity, because as she loves every thing that has any connexion with your mother, she is sure to feel a sufficient partiality for her son. Add to this, that your own personal recommendations are by no means small, or such as a woman of her fine taste and discernment can possibly overlook. She has many features in her character which you will admire; but one, in particular, on account of the rarity of it, will engage your attention and esteem. She has a degree of gratitude in her composition, so quick a sense of obligation, as is hardly to be found in any rank of life, and, if report say true, is scarce indeed in the superior. Discover but a wish to please her, and she never forgets it; not only thanks you, but the tears will start into her eyes at the recollection of the smallest service. With

these fine feelings she has the most, and the most harmless vivacity you can imagine. In short, she is—what you will find her to be, upon half an hour's conversation with her; and when I hear you have a journey to town in contemplation, I will send you her address.

Your mother is well, and joins with me in wishing that you may spend your time agreeably upon the coast of Sussex. Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 4, 1781.

I GENERALLY write the day before the post, but yesterday had no opportunity, being obliged to employ myself in settling my greenhouse for the winter. I am now writing before breakfast, that I may avail myself of every inch of time for the purpose. N. B. An expression a critic would quarrel with, and call it by some hard name, signifying a jumble of ideas, and an unnatural match between time and space.

I am glad to be undeceived respecting the opinion I had been erroneously led into on the subject of Johnson's criticism on Watts. Nothing can be more judicious, or more characteristic of a distinguishing taste, than his observations upon that writer; though I think him a little mistaken in his notion, that divine subjects have never been poetically treated with success. A little more Christian knowledge and experience would perhaps enable him to discover excellent poetry, upon spiritual themes, in the aforesaid little

Doctor. I perfectly acquiesce in the propriety of sending Johnson a copy of my productions; and I think it would be well to send it in our joint names, accompanied with a handsome card, such an one as you will know how to fabricate, and such as may predispose him to a favourable perusal of the book, by coaxing him into a good temper; for he is a great bear, with all his learning and penetration.

I forgot to tell you in my last, that I was well pleased with your proposed appearance in the title-page under the name of the editor. I do not care under how many names you appear in a book that calls me its author. In my last piece, which I finished the day before yesterday, I have told the public that I live upon the banks of the Ouse: that public is a great simpleton if it does not know that you live in London; it will consequently know that I had need of the assistance of some friend in town, and that I could have recourse to nobody with more propriety than yourself. I shall transcribe and submit to your approbation as fast as possible. I have now, I think, finished my volume; indeed I am almost weary of composing, having spent a year in doing nothing else. I reckon my volume will consist of about eight thousand lines. The season of dispatch which Johnson has so often promised is not yet arrived; a fortnight, and sometimes three weeks elapse before I am supplied with a new sheet; the next brings us into the middle of Hope, which I account the middle of the volume, consequently, unless he proceeds with more celerity, the publishing moment will escape us this year, as it did the last: for his own sake, however, I should

suppose he will catch it if he can, and be ready to exhibit by the meeting of Parliament after the Christmas recess.

Mrs. Unwin is well, and sends her love. Our thanks are due for a fine piece of skait and some prawns, both as fresh as when they took leave of their native element. We heartily wish Mrs. Newton better than *pretty* well, and the recovery of all the invalids in your family.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, October 6, 1781.

WHAT a world are you daily conversant with, which I have not seen these twenty years, and shall never see again! The arts of dissipation (I suppose) are no where practised with more refinement or success than at the place of your present residence. By your account of it, it seems to be just what it was when I visited it, a scene of idleness and luxury, music, dancing, cards, walking, riding, bathing, eating, drinking, coffee, tea, scandal, dressing, yawning, sleeping; the rooms perhaps more magnificent, because the proprietors are grown richer, but the manners and occupations of the company just the same. Though my life has long been like that of a recluse, I have not the temper of one, nor am I in the least an enemy to cheerfulness and good humour; but I cannot envy you your situation; I even feel myself constrained to prefer the silence of this nook, and the snug fireside

in our own diminutive parlour, to all the splendour and gaiety of Brighton.

You ask me, how I feel on the occasion of my approaching publication. Perfectly at my ease. If I had not been pretty well assured before hand that my tranquillity would be but little endangered by such a measure, I would never have engaged in it; for I cannot bear disturbance. I have had in view two principal objects; first, to amuse myself,—and secondly, to compass that point in such a manner, that others might possibly be the better for my amusement. If I have succeeded, it will give me pleasure; but if I have failed, I shall not be mortified to the degree that might perhaps be expected. I remember an old adage, (though not where it is to be found,) "*bene vixit, qui bene latuit,*" and if I had recollected it at the right time, it should have been the motto to my book. By the way, it will make an excellent one for Retirement, if you can but tell me whom to quote for it. The critics cannot deprive me of the pleasure I have in reflecting, that so far as my leisure has been employed in writing for the public, it has been conscientiously employed, and with a view to their advantage. There is nothing agreeable, to be sure, in being chronicled for a dunce; but I believe there lives not a man upon earth who would be less affected by it than myself. With all this indifference to fame, which you know me too well to suppose me capable of affecting, I have taken the utmost pains to deserve it. This may appear a mystery or a paradox in practice, but it is true. I considered that the taste of the day is refined, and delicate to excess, and that to disgust the delicacy of

taste, by a slovenly inattention to it, would be to forfeit at once all hope of being useful; and for this reason, though I have written more verse this last year than perhaps any man in England, I have finished, and polished, and touched, and retouched, with the utmost care. If after all I should be converted into waste paper, it may be my misfortune, but it will not be my fault. I shall bear it with the most perfect serenity.

I do not mean to give ——— a copy: he is a good-natured little man, and crows exactly like a cock, but knows no more of verse than the cock he imitates.

Whoever supposes that Lady Austen's fortune is precarious, is mistaken. I can assure you, upon the ground of the most circumstantial and authentic information, that it is both genteel and perfectly safe.

Yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, Oct. 19, 1781.

YOUR fear lest I should think you unworthy of my correspondence, on account of your delay to answer, may change sides now, and more properly belongs to me. It is long since I received your last, and yet I believe I can say truly, that not a post has gone by me since the receipt of it that has not reminded me of the debt I owe you, for your obliging and unreserved communications both in prose and verse, especially for the latter, because I consider them as marks of your peculiar confidence. The truth is, I have been such a

verse-maker myself, and so busy in preparing a volume for the press, which I imagine will make its appearance in the course of the winter, that I hardly had leisure to listen to the calls of any other engagement. It is however finished, and gone to the printer's, and I have nothing now to do with it, but to correct the sheets as they are sent to me, and consign it over to the judgement of the public. It is a bold undertaking at this time of day, when so many writers of the greatest abilities have gone before, who seem to have anticipated every valuable subject, as well as all the graces of poetical embellishment, to step forth into the world in the character of a bard, especially when it is considered, that luxury, idleness, and vice, have debauched the public taste, and that nothing hardly is welcome but childish fiction, or what has at least a tendency to excite a laugh. I thought, however, that I had stumbled upon some subjects, that had never before been poetically treated, and upon some others, to which I imagined it would not be difficult to give an air of novelty by the manner of treating them. My sole drift is to be useful; a point which however I knew I should in vain aim at, unless I could be likewise entertaining. I have therefore fixed these two strings upon my bow, and by the help of both have done my best to send my arrow to the mark. My readers will hardly have begun to laugh, before they will be called upon to correct that levity, and peruse me with a more serious air. As to the effect, I leave it alone in His hands, who can alone produce it: neither prose nor verse can reform the manners of a dissolute age, much *less can* they inspire a sense of religious obligation,

unless assisted and made efficacious by the power who superintends the truth he has vouchsafed to impart.

You made my heart ache with a sympathetic sorrow, when you described the state of your mind on occasion of your late visit into Hertfordshire. Had I been previously informed of your journey before you made it, I should have been able to have foretold all your feelings with the most unerring certainty of prediction. You will never cease to feel upon that subject; but with your principles of resignation, and acquiescence in the divine will, you will always feel as becomes a Christian. We are forbidden to murmur, but we are not forbidden to regret; and whom we loved tenderly while living we may still pursue with an affectionate remembrance, without having any occasion to charge ourselves with rebellion against the sovereignty that appointed a separation. A day is coming when I am confident you will see and know, that mercy to both parties was the principal agent in a scene, the recollection of which is still painful.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, Nov. 5, 1781.

I GIVE you joy of your safe return from the lips of the great deep. You did not indeed discern many signs of sobriety, or true wisdom, among the people of Brighthelmstone, but it is not possible to observe the manners of a multitude, of whatever rank, without learning something; I mean, if a man has a mind like yours, capable of reflection. If he sees nothing

to imitate, he is sure to see something to avoid; if nothing to congratulate his fellow creatures upon, at least much to excite his compassion. There is not, I think, so melancholy a sight in the world,—(an hospital is not to be compared with it,—) as that of a thousand persons distinguished by the name of gentry, who, gentle perhaps by nature, and made more gentle by education, have the appearance of being innocent and inoffensive, yet being destitute of all religion, or not at all governed by the religion they profess, are none of them at any great distance from an eternal state, where self-deception will be impossible, and where amusements cannot enter. Some of them, we may say, will be reclaimed;—it is most probable indeed that some of them will, because mercy, if one may be allowed the expression, is fond of distinguishing itself by seeking its objects among the most desperate cases; but the Scripture gives no encouragement to the warmest charity to hope for deliverance for them all. When I see an afflicted and an unhappy man, I say to myself, there is perhaps a man whom the world would envy, if they knew the value of his sorrows, which are possibly intended only to soften his heart, and to turn his affections toward their proper centre. But when I see or hear of a crowd of voluptuaries, who have no ears but for music, no eyes but for splendour, and no tongue but for impertinence and folly,—I say, or at least I see occasion to say—This is madness!—This persisted in must have a tragical conclusion.—It will condemn you, not only as christians unworthy of the name, but as intelligent creatures.—You know by the *light of* nature, if you have not quenched it, that there

is a God, and that a life like yours cannot be according to his will.

I ask no pardon of you for the gravity and gloominess of these reflections, which I stumbled on when I least expected it; though, to say the truth, these or others of a like complexion are sure to occur to me, when I think of a scene of public diversion like that you have lately left.

I remember Mr. —— well; a man famous for nothing but idling away his time at the coffee-house, and bathing upon the open beach without the decent use of a machine. I may say upon the surest ground, that the world to which he conforms, despises him for doing so; because I remember well that I and my party, who had not a grain of religion amongst us, always mentioned him with disdain; his charitable profanation of the sabbath will never earn him any other wages.

I am inclined to hope that Johnson told you the truth, when he said he should publish me soon after Christmas. His press has been rather more punctual in its remittances than it used to be; we have now but little more than two of the longest pieces, and the small ones that are to follow, by way of epilogue, to print off, and then the affair is finished. But once more I am obliged to gape for franks; only these, which I hope will be the last I shall want, at yours and Mr. Smith's convenient leisure.

We rejoice that you have so much reason to be satisfied with John's proficiency. The more spirit he has the better, if his spirit be but manageable, and put under such management as your prudence and

Mrs. Unwin's will suggest. I need not guard you against severity, of which I conclude there is no need, and which I am sure you are not at all inclined to practise without it; but perhaps if I was to whisper, "beware of too much indulgence!"—I should only give a hint that the fondness of a father for a fine boy might seem to justify. I have no particular reason for the caution, at this distance it is not possible that I should, but in a case like yours an admonition of that sort seldom wants propriety.

Your mother has been considerably indisposed with a sore throat and feverish complaint, but is well again, except that her strength, which is never that of an Amazon, is not quite restored. Her love attends you and your family, and mine goes with it.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 7, 1781.

So far as Johnson is to be depended on, and I begin to hope that he is now in earnest, I think myself warranted to furnish you with an answer to the question which you say so often meets you. Mr. Unwin made the same enquiry at his shop in his way to Stock from Brighthelmstone, when he assured him that the book would be printed off in a month, and ready for publication after the holidays. For some time past the business has proceeded glibly, and if he perseveres at the same rate, it is probable his answer will prove a *true one.*

Having discontinued the practice of verse-making for some weeks, I now feel quite incapable of resuming it; and can only wonder at it, as one of the most extraordinary incidents in my life, that I should have composed a volume. Had it been suggested to me as a practicable thing, in better days, though I should have been glad to have found it so, many hindrances would have conspired to withhold me from such an enterprise. I should not have dared, at that time of day, to have committed my name to the public, and my reputation to the hazard of their opinion. But it is otherwise with me now. I am more indifferent about what may touch me in that point, than ever I was in my life. The stake that would then have seemed important, now seems trivial; and it is of little consequence to me, who no longer feel myself possessed of what I accounted infinitely more valuable, whether the world's verdict shall pronounce me a poet, or an empty pretender to the title. This happy coldness towards a matter so generally interesting to all rhymers, left me quite at liberty for the undertaking, unfettered by fear, and under no restraints of that diffidence, which is my natural temper, and which would either have made it impossible for me to commence an author by name, or would have insured my miscarriage if I had. In my last dispatches to Johnson, I sent him a new edition of the title-page, having discarded the Latin paradox which stood at the head of the former, and added a French motto to that from Virgil. It is taken from a volume of the excellent Caraccioli, called *Jouissance de soi-même*, and strikes me as peculiarly apposite to my purpose.

Mr. Bull is an honest man. We have seen him twice since he received your orders to march hither, and faithfully told us it was in consequence of those orders that he came. He dined with us yesterday; we were all in pretty good spirits, and the day passed very agreeably. It is not long since he called on Mr. Scott. Mr. Raban came in. Mr. Bull began, addressing himself to the former, My friend, you are in trouble; you are unhappy; I read it in your countenance. Mr. Scott replied, he had been so, but he was better. Come then, says Mr. Bull, I will expound to you the cause of all your anxiety. You are too common; you make yourself cheap. Visit your people less, and converse more with your own heart. How often do you speak to them in the week?—"Thrice." —Ay, there it is! Your sermons are an old ballad; your prayers are an old ballad; and you are an old ballad too.—"I would wish to tread in the steps of Mr. Newton."—You do well to follow his steps in all other instances; but in this instance you are wrong, and so was he. Mr. Newton trod a path which no man but himself could have used so long as he did, and he wore it out long before he went from Olney. Too much familiarity and condescension cost him the estimation of his people. He thought he should insure their love, to which he had the best possible title, and by those very means he lost it. Be wise, my friend; take warning; make yourself scarce, if you wish that persons of little understanding should know how to prize you.

When he related to us this harangue, so nicely

adjusted to the case of the third person present, it did us both good, and as Jacques says,

" It made my lungs to crow like chanticleer."

Mrs. Unwin wishes me to inform you, that the character of Thomas —— is no longer a doubtful one at Olney. He is much addicted to public-houses, and every body knows it. Geary Ball led him home drunk from one of them not long since, where he had been playing at quoits, and regaling himself with drink till he was unable to stand unsupported. She thought it the part of a friend to communicate to you this piece of intelligence, that you may not lend him money and lose it. He used frequently to borrow of us, but we intend henceforth to discontinue our aids of that sort.

I have only seen Mr. Jones since I received your last, and have had no opportunity to mention to him your enquiry. He was alive yesterday, however, and not long since spoke of an intended journey to London.

We wish your letter to your parishioners may have the best effects, and shall be glad to read it. Many thanks for three couple of mackerel, perfectly fresh. Our love of you both, though often sent to London, is still with us. If it is not an inexhaustible well, (there is but one love that can, with propriety, be called so,) it is, however, a very deep one, and not likely to fail while we are living.

Yours, my dear sir,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 19, 1781.

I REALLY think your apprehensions for Mr. Madan are but too well founded. I should be more concerned than surprised to find them verified. Sanguine and confident as he has been, his mortification will be extreme when he finds that what he took for *terra firma*, was a mere vapour hanging in the horizon, in pursuit of which he has run his vessel upon shoals that must prove fatal to her. Discoverers of truth are generally sober, modest, and humble; and if their discoveries are less valued by mankind than they deserve to be, can bear the disappointment with patience and equality of temper. But hasty reasoners and confident asserters are generally wedded to an hypothesis, and transported with joy at their fancied acquisitions, are impatient under contradiction, and grow wild at the thoughts of a refutation. Never was an air-built castle more completely demolished than his is likely to be; I wish with you that he may be able to sustain the shock, but am at a loss to conceive how he should do it. After awakening the attention of mankind, and calling the world around him to listen to his Εὑρήκα, after having distressed the serious, and excited the curiosity, (perhaps the appetite,) of the giddy and unthinking, to find himself baffled with so much ease, and refuted with such convincing perspicuity on the part of his opponent, must give a terrible blow to every passion that engaged him in the task, and that was soothed and gratified to the utmost by his fancied success in it. This may, (and every considerate person will wish

it may,) dispose him to a serious recollection and examination of his past conduct, and work in him a reform more valuable to him than the possession of all Solomon's wives would be, or even the establishment of polygamy by law. Surely the poor lunatic who uses his blanket for a robe, and imagines that a few straws stuck whimsically through his hair are a royal diadem, is not more to be pitied, perhaps less, than the profound reasoner who turns over shelves of folios with infinite industry and toil, and at the end of all his labour finds that he has grasped a shadow, and made himself a jest to the bystander.

I shall be obliged to you if, when you have had an opportunity to learn, you will let me know how he bears the brunt, whether he hardens himself against conviction, which in this case is scarcely possible, whether he repents of what is past, or whether he is quite overwhelmed by regret and fruitless sorrow.

You do me an honour I little deserve when you ask my opinion upon any occasion, and speak of being determined by it. Such as it is, however, it is always at your service, and would be if it were better worth your having.—The dictates of compassion and humanity prompt you to interpose your good offices in order to prevent the publication with which this unhappy man is threatened by Mr. Haweis. They are advisers you may safely listen to, and deserve the more attention on the present occasion, as you are perhaps the only man in the world to whom such a design has been suggested, and who would know how to manage the execution of it with sufficient delicacy and discretion. The book and the author are distinct subjects,

and will be for ever accounted such by all reasonable persons. The author, indeed, may suffer by the follies of the book, but the latter ought not to be judged by the character of the writer. If it were otherwise, yet in this case there can be no need of Mr. Haweis, the point in dispute being already tried, and Mr. Madan's arguments condemned at the bar of the public. Mr. Haweis will hurt himself more by one such ungenerous proceeding, than he can possibly hurt Mr. Madan by divulging, if he can do it, a thousand irregularities in his conduct. Sensual and lawless gratifications are odious enough, especially in a minister; but double detestation attends the man who, to gratify a present enmity, avails himself of secrets he could never have had possession of, had he not once professed himself a friend. If it should happen too that Mr. Madan's intellects should be swept away by such a deluge of obloquy and detraction, following close upon his present disappointment, (an event not at all improbable,) Mr. Haweis will have reason to wish that he had taken his life rather than destroyed his character. He thinks perhaps the interest of the cause demands it of him; but when was the cause promoted by a discovery of the vices or follies of its advocates and professors? On the whole, therefore, if I must advise, I would advise to write.

I believe I returned Mrs. Newton thanks for the cocoa nuts as soon as we received them, but have now a fresh occasion to thank her, Mrs. Unwin having received much benefit from them, and found her health improved ever since she began to eat them.

Our controversies here are at a stand for the pre-

sent. Mr. Raban has not yet received the citation with which Mr. Page threatened him, and the Warringtonians are contented not to push forward in the business of the pew till they have seen Mr. Wright, who is expected here on Tuesday.—Mr. Page is very thinly attended; Weston and Clifton and the meetings drink up all his congregation. There were but fifteen to wait upon his last Thursday's lecture;—the blessed effect of quarrelling about straws, when he might have had peace with every body if he had not gone out of his way to seek contention. His hearers, however, complain of great inconsistency in his preaching, and some of his warmest partisans, and whose attachment to him has lasted the longest, begin to be disgusted.

Many thanks for two pair of remarkably fine soles, with shrimps; they were here in sixteen hours after they set out from London, and came very opportunely for me, who, having a violent cold, could hardly have eaten any thing else.

Mrs. Unwin intended to have sent a couple of fowls, but being taken out of the coop, one of them appeared to be distempered, and two others, on examination, in the same predicament; one so bad that we were obliged to throw it away, and the other we gave away, not thinking it eatable except by those whose stomachs were less nice than our own. It is, I suppose, an epipoultrical malady.

You told me Mrs. Newton intended to have sent me a long story about the fish. With both my two eyes, assisted by my two glasses, I could make neither

more nor less of it than a long song, and so I read the passage to Mrs. Unwin once and again. I should have felt more than ordinary concern for the business that prevented her, and have endeavoured by all means to persuade her to resume her intention and to send me this song immediately, if Mrs. Unwin had not some time after discovered, with more sagacity than I happened to have in exercise, that, what I took for a song was only a story, the insignificant letter *t* being omitted, and the *ry* having assumed the appearance on this occasion of their near relations *ng*.

Mrs. Unwin would have attempted to write, but I dissuaded her from it, because even when she is pretty well she finds it hurtful.

You will believe us both, as ever,

Your obliged and affectionate friends and servants,

WM. AND M———.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 24, 1781.

NEWS is always acceptable, especially from another world. I cannot tell you what has been done in the Chesapeake, but I can tell you what has passed at West Wycombe, in this county. Do you feel yourself disposed to give credit to the story of an apparition? No, say you. I am of your mind. I do not believe more than one in a hundred of those tales with which old women frighten children, and teach children to frighten each other. But you are not such a philosopher, I suppose, as to have persuaded yourself that an

apparition is an impossible thing. You can attend to a story of that sort, if well authenticated? Yes. Then I can tell you one.

You have heard, no doubt, of the romantic friendship that subsisted once between Paul Whitehead, and Lord le Despenser, the late Sir Francis Dashwood.—When Paul died, he left his lordship a legacy. It was his heart, which was taken out of his body, and sent as directed. His friend having built a church, and at that time just finished it, used it as a mausoleum upon this occasion; and having (as I think the newspapers told us at the time) erected an elegant pillar in the centre of it, on the summit of this pillar, enclosed in a golden urn, he placed the heart in question. But not as a lady places a china figure upon her mantel-tree, or on the top of her cabinet, but with much respectful ceremony, and all the forms of funeral solemnity. He hired the best singers and best performers. He composed an anthem for the purpose, he invited all the nobility and gentry in the country to assist at the celebration of these obsequies, and having formed them all into an august procession, marched to the place appointed at their head, and consigned the posthumous treasure, with his own hands, to its state of honourable elevation. Having thus, as he thought, (and as he might well think, for it seems they were both renowned for their infidelity, and if they had any religion at all were pagans,) appeased the manes of the deceased, he rested satisfied with what he had done, and supposed his friend would rest. But not so;—about a week since, I received a letter from a person, who cannot have been misinformed, telling me that Paul has ap-

peared frequently of late to his Lordship, who labours under a complication of distempers,—that it is supposed the shock he has suffered from such unexpected visits will make his recovery, which was before improbable, impossible. Nor is this all: to ascertain the fact, and to put it out of the power of scepticism to argue away the reality of it, there are few, if any, of his lordship's numerous household, who have not likewise seen him, sometimes in the park, sometimes in the garden, as well as in the house, by day and by night, indifferently. I make no reflections upon this incident, having other things to write about, and but little room.

I am much indebted to Mr. Smith for more franks, and still more obliged by the handsome note with which he accompanied them. He has furnished me sufficiently for the present occasion, and by his readiness, and obliging manner of doing it, encouraged me to have recourse to him, in case another exigence of the same kind should offer. A French author I was reading last night says, He that has written, will write again. If the critics do not set their foot upon this first egg that I have laid, and crush it, I shall probably verify his observation; and when I feel my spirits rise, and that I am armed with industry sufficient for the purpose, undertake the production of another volume. At present, however, I do not feel myself so disposed; and, indeed, he that would write, should read, not that he may retail the observations of other men, but that, being thus refreshed and replenished, he may find himself in a condition to *make* and to produce his own. I reckon it among my

principal advantages, as a composer of verses, that I have not read an English poet these thirteen years, and but one these twenty years. Imitation, even of the best models, is my aversion; it is servile and mechanical, a trick that has enabled many to usurp the name of author, who could not have written at all, if they had not written upon the pattern of somebody indeed original. But when the ear and the taste have been much accustomed to the manner of others, it is almost impossible to avoid it; and we imitate in spite of ourselves, just in proportion as we admire. But enough of this.

Your mother, who is as well as the season of the year will permit, desires me to add her love. The salmon you sent us arrived safe, and was remarkably fresh. What a comfort it is to have a friend who knows that we love salmon, and who cannot pass by a fishmonger's shop, without finding his desire to send us some, a temptation too strong to be resisted!

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 26, 1781.

I WROTE to you by the last post, supposing you at Stock; but lest that letter should not follow you to Laytonstone, and you should suspect me of unreasonable delay, and lest the frank you have sent me should degenerate into waste paper, and perish upon my hands, I write again. The former letter, however,

containing all my present stock of intelligence, it is more than possible that this may prove a blank, or but little worthy of your acceptance. You will do me the justice to suppose, that if I could be very entertaining, I would be so, because, by giving me credit for such a willingness to please, you only allow me a share of that universal vanity, which inclines every man, upon all occasions, to exhibit himself to the best advantage. To say the truth, however, when I write, as I do to you, not about business, nor on any subject that approaches to that description, I mean much less my correspondent's amusement, which my modesty will not always permit me to hope for, than my own. There is a pleasure annexed to the communication of one's ideas, whether by word of mouth, or by letter, which nothing earthly can supply the place of, and it is the delight we find in this mutual intercourse, that not only proves us to be creatures intended for social life, but more than any thing else perhaps fits us for it. —I have no patience with philosophers;—they, one and all, suppose (at least I understand it to be a prevailing opinion among them) that man's weakness, his necessities, his inability to stand alone, have furnished the prevailing motive, under the influence of which he renounced at first a life of solitude, and became a gregarious creature. It seems to me more reasonable, as well as more honourable to my species, to suppose, that generosity of soul, and a brotherly attachment to our own kind, drew us, as it were, to one common centre, taught us to build cities, and inhabit them, and welcome every stranger, that would cast in his

lot amongst us, that we might enjoy fellowship with each other, and the luxury of reciprocal endearments, without which a paradise could afford no comfort. There are indeed all sorts of characters in the world; there are some whose understandings are so sluggish, and whose hearts are such mere clods, that they live in society without either contributing to the sweets of it, or having any relish for them.—A man of this stamp passes by our window continually; he draws patterns for the lace makers; I never saw him conversing with a neighbour but once in my life, though I have known him by sight these twelve years; he is of a very sturdy make, has a round belly, extremely protuberant, which he evidently considers as his best friend, because it is his only companion, and it is the labour of his life to fill it. I can easily conceive, that it is merely the love of good eating and drinking, and now and then the want of a new pair of shoes, that attaches this man so much to the neighbourhood of his fellow mortals; for suppose these exigencies, and others of a like kind, to subsist no longer, and what is there that could possibly give society the preference in his esteem? He might strut about with his two thumbs upon his hips in a wilderness; he could hardly be more silent than he is at Olney, and for any advantage, or comfort, or friendship, or brotherly affection, he could not be more destitute of such blessings there, than in his present situation. But other men have something more than guts to satisfy; there are the yearnings of the heart, which, let philosophers say what they will, are more importunate than all the

necessities of the body, that will not suffer a creature, worthy to be called human, to be content with an insulated life, or to look for his friends among the beasts of the forest. Yourself for instance! It is not because there are no tailors or pastry-cooks to be found upon Salisbury Plain, that you do not choose it for your abode, but because you are a philanthropist,—because you are susceptible of social impressions, and have a pleasure in doing a kindness when you can. —Witness the salmon you sent, and the salmon you still mean to send; to which your mother wishes you to add a handful of prawns, not only because she likes them, but because they agree with her so well that she even finds them medicinal.

Now upon the word of a poor creature, I have said all that I have said, without the least intention to say one word of it when I began. But thus it is with my thoughts:—when you shake a crab-tree, the fruit falls; good for nothing indeed when you have got it, but still the best that is to be expected from a crab-tree. You are welcome to them, such as they are, and if you approve my sentiments, tell the philosophers of the day, that I have outshot them all, and have discovered the true origin of society, when I least looked for it.

We should be glad to receive this fresh proof of your regard, viz. the additional piece of salmon, at any time before Christmas.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

THE salmon and lobsters arrived safe, and were remarkably fine: we knew the reason why you sent no prawns, before you mentioned it. Accept our thanks for the welcome present.

I dare say I do not enter exactly into your idea of a present theocracy, because mine amounts to no more than the common one, that all mankind, though few are really aware of it, act under a providential direction, and that a gracious superintendence in particular is the lot of those who trust in God. Thus I think respecting individuals; and with respect to the kingdoms of the earth, that perhaps by his own immediate operation, though more probably by the intervention of angels, (*vide* Daniel,) the great Governor manages and rules them, assigns them their origin, duration, and end, appoints them prosperity or adversity, glory or disgrace, as their virtues or their vices, their regard to the dictates of conscience and his word, or their prevailing neglect of both, may indicate and require. But in this persuasion, as I said, I do not at all deviate from the general opinion of those who believe a Providence, at least who have a scriptural belief of it. I suppose, therefore, you mean something more, and shall be glad to be more particularly informed.

I am glad—(we are both so) that you are not afraid of seeing your own image multiplied too fast: it is not necessarily a disadvantage. It is sometimes easier to manage and provide for half a dozen children, than to regulate the passions and satisfy the extravagant

demands of one. I remember hearing Moses Browne say, that when he had only two or three children, he thought he should have been distracted; but when he had ten or a dozen, he was perfectly easy, and thought no more about the matter.

I see but one feature in the face of our national concerns that pleases me;—the war with America, it seems, is to be conducted on a different plan. This is something; when a long series of measures, of a certain description, has proved unsuccessful, the adoption of others is at least pleasing, as it encourages a hope that they may possibly prove wiser, and more effectual; but, indeed, without discipline, all is lost. Pitt himself could have done nothing with such tools; but he would not have been so betrayed; he would have made the traitors answer with their heads, for their cowardice or supineness, and their punishment would have made survivors active.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 27, 1781.

FIRST Mr. Wilson, then Mr. Teedon, and lastly Mr. Whitford, each with a cloud of melancholy on his brow, and with a mouth wide open, have just announced to us this unwelcome intelligence from America. We are sorry to hear it, and should be more cast down than we are, if we did not know that this catastrophe was ordained beforehand, and that therefore neither conduct, nor courage, nor any means that can possibly be mentioned, could have prevented it.

If the King and his ministry can be contented to close the business here, and, taking poor Dean Tucker's advice, resign the Americans into the hands of their new masters, it may be well for Old England. But if they will still persevere, they will find it, I doubt, an hopeless contest to the last. Domestic murmurs will grow louder, and the hands of faction, being strengthened by this late miscarriage, will find it easy to set fire to the pile of combustibles they have been so long employed in building. These are my politics; and for aught I can see, you and we by our respective firesides, though neither connected with men in power, nor professing to possess any share of that sagacity which thinks itself qualified to wield the affairs of kingdoms, can make as probable conjectures, and look forward into futurity with as clear a sight, as the greatest man in the cabinet.

Though when I wrote the passage in question, I was not at all aware of any impropriety in it, and though I have frequently since that time both read and recollected it with the same approbation, I lately became uneasy upon the subject, and had no rest in my mind for three days, till I resolved to submit it to a trial at your tribunal, and to dispose of it ultimately according to your sentence. I am glad you have condemned it; and though I do not feel as if I could presently supply its place, shall be willing to attempt the task, whatever labour it may cost me; and rejoice that it will not be in the power of the critics, whatever else they may charge me with, to accuse me of bigotry, or a design to make a certain denomination of Christians odious, at the hazard of the public peace. I had rather

my book were burnt, than a single line guilty of such a tendency should escape me.

We thank you for two copies of your Address to your Parishioners. The first I lent to Mr. Scott, whom I have not seen since I put it into his hands. You have managed your subject well; have applied yourself to despisers and absentees of every description, in terms so expressive of the interest you take in their welfare, that the most wrong-headed person cannot be offended. We both wish it may have the effect you intend, and that prejudices and groundless apprehensions being removed, the immediate objects of your ministry may make a more considerable part of your congregation.

I return Mr. Madan's letter, with thanks for a sight of it. Having forfeited all the rest of his most valuable attachments without regret, and sacrificed I suppose many of his dearest connexions to his beloved hypothesis, he still recollects that he had once a warm place in your affections, and seems still unwilling to resign it. It is easy to see that I and my book were mentioned, merely because we afforded him an opportunity to renew a correspondence, which, blind as he is, and intoxicated with error, he still catches at with eagerness, and cannot prevail with himself to renounce. But yet how obstinate, and, in appearance, how perfectly a stranger to the convincing arguments by which his whole edifice of sophistry and misinterpretation has been so completely demolished! Has he never seen his opponent in the Review? If he has, he ought at least to attempt to answer him. To treat so able and *so* learned a writer with neglect, is but a paltry subter-

fuge, and no reasonable man will ever give him credit for the sincerity of the contempt he may affect for a critic so deserving of his attention. If he has not, his behaviour is disingenuous to the last degree, and will, I suppose, as little serve his purpose. A champion has no right to despise his enemy till he has faced and vanquished him. But henceforth I suppose this noisy subject will be silent; may it rest in peace, and may none be hardy enough hereafter to disturb its ashes.

Many thanks for a barrel of oysters, which we are still eating. Nanny Puttenham desires me to send her duty: she is brought to bed, and enjoys a more comfortable frame of mind. The letter from Mr. Old ought to have waited on you with my last, but was forgot. Our best love attends yourself and Mrs. Newton.

Yours, my dear Sir, as ever,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

[FRAGMENT.]

MY DEAR FRIEND, The same date.

A VISIT from Mr. Whitford shortened one of your letters to me; and now the same cause has operated with the same effect upon one of mine to you. He is just gone; desired me to send his love, and talks of enclosing a letter to you in my next cover.

Literas tuas irato Sacerdoti scriptas, legi, perlegi, et ne verbum quidem mutandum censeo. Gratias tibi acturum si sapiat, existimo; sin alitèr

eveniat, amici tamen officium præstitisti, et te coram te vindicâsti.

I have not written in Latin to show my scholarship, nor to excite Mrs. Newton's curiosity, nor for any other wise reason whatever; but merely because, just at that moment, it came into my head to do so.

Mrs. Unwin having suggested the hint, I have added just as many lines to my poem lately mentioned as make up the whole number two hundred. I had no intention to write a round sum, but it has happened so. She thought there was a fair opportunity to give the Bishops a slap; and as it would not have been civil to have denied a lady so reasonable a request, I have just made the powder fly out of their wigs a little.

I never wrote a copy of Mary and John in my life, except that which I sent to you. It was one of those bagatelles which sometimes spring up like mushrooms in my imagination, either while I am writing or just before I begin. I sent it to you, because to you I send any thing that I think may raise a smile; but should never have thought of multiplying the impression. Neither did I ever repeat them to any one except Mrs. Unwin. The inference is fair and easy, that you have some friend who has a good memory.

This afternoon the maid opened the parlour-door, and told us there was a lady in the kitchen. We desired she might be introduced, and prepared for the reception of Mrs. Jones. But it proved to be a lady unknown to us, and not Mrs. Jones. She walked directly up to Mrs. Unwin, and never drew back till their noses were almost in contact. It seemed as if

she meant to salute her. An uncommon degree of familiarity, accompanied with an air of most extraordinary gravity, made me think her a little crazy. I was alarmed, and so was Mrs. Unwin. She had a bundle in her hand—a silk handkerchief tied up at the four corners. When I found she was not mad, I took her for a smuggler, and made no doubt but she had brought samples of contraband goods. But our surprise, considering the lady's appearance and deportment, was tenfold what it had been, when we found that it was Mary Philips's daughter, who had brought us a few apples by way of a specimen of a quantity she had for sale. She drank tea with us, and behaved herself during the rest of her stay with much—*cætera desunt.*

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 4, 1781.

THE present to the Queen of France, and the piece addressed to Sir Joshua Reynolds, my only two political efforts, being of the predictive kind, and both falsified, or likely to be so, by the miscarriage of the royal cause in America, were already condemned when I received your last. I have a poetical epistle which I wrote last summer, and another poem not yet finished, in stanzas, with which I mean to supply their places. Henceforth I have done with politics. The stage of national affairs is such a fluctuating scene, that an event which appears probable to-day becomes impossible to-morrow; and unless a man were indeed a prophet, he cannot, but with the greatest hazard of losing his labour, bestow his rhymes upon future con-

tingencies, which perhaps are never to take place but in his own wishes and in the reveries of his own fancy. I learned when I was a boy, being the son of a staunch Whig, and a man that loved his country, to glow with that patriotic enthusiasm which is apt to break forth into poetry, or at least to prompt a person, if he has any inclination that way, to poetical endeavours. Prior's pieces of that sort were recommended to my particular notice; and as that part of the present century was a season when clubs of a political character, and consequently political songs, were much in fashion, the best in that style, some written by Rowe, and I think some by Congreve, and many by other wits of the day, were proposed to my admiration. Being grown up, I became desirous of imitating such bright examples, and while I lived in the Temple produced several halfpenny ballads, two or three of which had the honour to be popular. What we learn in childhood we retain long; and the successes we met with, about three years ago, when D'Estaing was twice repulsed, once in America, and once in the West Indies, having set fire to my patriotic zeal once more, it discovered itself by the same symptoms, and produced effects much like those it had produced before. But, unhappily, the ardour I felt upon the occasion, disdaining to be confined within the bounds of fact, pushed me upon uniting the prophetical with the poetical character, and defeated its own purpose. I am glad it did. The less there is of that sort in my book the better; it will be more consonant to your character, who patronise the volume, and, indeed, to the constant tenor of my own thoughts upon public matters, that I should exhort my countrymen to repentance, than that I should

flatter their pride—that vice for which, perhaps, they are even now so severely punished.

I subjoin the lines with which I mean to supersede the obnoxious ones in Expostulation. If it should lie fairly in your way to do it, I will beg of you to deliver them to Johnson, and at the same time to strike your pen through the offensive passage. I ask it merely because it will save a frank, but not unless you can do it without inconvenience to yourself. The new paragraph consists exactly of the same number of lines with the old one, for upon this occasion I worked like a tailor when he sews a patch upon a hole in your coat, supposing it might be necessary to do so. Upon second thoughts I will enclose the lines instead of adding them *ad calcem*, that I may save you the trouble of a transcript.

We are glad, for Mr. Barham's sake, that he has been so happily disappointed. How little does the world suspect what passes in it every day!—that true religion is working the same wonders now as in the first ages of the church,—that parents surrender up their children into the hands of God, to die at his own appointed moment, and by what death he pleases, without a murmur, and receive them again as if by a resurrection from the dead! The world, however, would be more justly chargeable with wilful blindness than it is, if all professors of the truth exemplified its power in their conduct as conspicuously as Mr. Barham.

Easterly winds, and a state of confinement within our own walls, suit neither me nor Mrs. Unwin; though we are both, to use the Irish term rather un-

well than ill. The cocoa nut, though it had not a drop of liquor in it, and though the kernel came out whole, entirely detached from the shell, was an exceeding good one. Our hearts are with you.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

Mrs. Madan is happy. She will be found ripe, fall when she may.

We are sorry you speak doubtfully about a spring visit to Olney. Those doubts must not outlive the winter.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, The shortest day, 1781.

I MIGHT easily make this letter a continuation of my last, another national miscarriage having furnished me with a fresh illustration of the remarks we have both been making. Mr. Smith, who has most obligingly supplied me with franks throughout my whole concern with Johnson, accompanied the last parcel he sent me with a note dated from the House of Commons, in which he seemed happy to give me the earliest intelligence of the capture of the French transports by Admiral Kempenfelt, and of a close engagement between the two fleets, so much to be expected. This note was written on Monday, and reached me by Wednesday's post; but, alas! the same post brought us the newspaper that informed us of his being forced to fly before a much superior enemy, and glad to take shelter in the port he had left so lately. This event,

I suppose, will have worse consequences than the mere disappointment; will furnish opposition, as all our ill success has done, with the fuel of dissension, and with the means of thwarting and perplexing administration. Thus all we purchase with the many millions expended yearly, is distress to ourselves, instead of our enemies, and domestic quarrels, instead of victories abroad. It takes a great many blows to knock down a great nation; and, in the case of poor England, a great many heavy ones have not been wanting. They make us reel and stagger, indeed; but the blow is not yet struck that is to make us fall upon our knees. That fall would save us; but if we fall upon our side at last, we are undone. So much for politics. Next comes news from the north of a different complexion, which it is possible may be news to you.

Mr. Fletcher, on his recovery from his late dangerous illness, has started up a Perfectionist. He preached perfection not long since at Dewsbury, where Mr. Powley and his curate heard him. He told the people that he that sinned was no Christian, that he himself did not sin, *ergo* had a right to the appellation. Mr. Powley was so shocked by his violent distortion of the Scriptures, by which he attempted to prove his doctrine, that he thought it necessary to preach expressly against him the ensuing Sabbath; and when he was desired to admit the perfect man into his pulpit, of course refused it. I have heard that he is remarkably spiritual. Can this be? Is it possible that a person of that description can be left to indulge himself in such a proud conceit,—is it possible he should be so defective in self-knowledge, and so little

acquainted with his own heart? If I had not heard you yourself speak favourably of him, I should little scruple to say, that having spent much of his life, and exerted all his talents, in the defence of Arminian errors, he is at last left to fall into an error more pernicious than Arminius is to be charged with, or the most ignorant of his disciples. When I hear that you are engaged in the propagation of error, I shall believe that an humble and dependant mind is not yet secured from it, and that the promises which annex the blessing of instruction to a temper teachable and truly child-like, are to be received *cum grano salis*, and understood with a limitation. Mr. Wesley has also been very troublesome in the same place, and asserted, in perfect harmony of sentiment with his brother Fletcher, that Mr. Whitefield disseminated more false doctrine in the nation, than he should ever be able to eradicate. Methinks they do not see through a glass darkly, but for want of a glass they see not at all.

I enclose a few lines on a thought which struck me yesterday. If you approve of them, you know what to do with them. I should think they might occupy the place of an introduction, and should call them by that name, if I did not judge the name I have given them necessary for the information of the reader. A flatting-mill is not met with in every street, and my book will, perhaps, fall into the hands of many who do not know that such a mill was ever invented. It happened to me, however, to spend much of my time in one, when I was a boy, when I frequently amused myself with watching the operation I describe.

Mrs. Unwin sends her love, and will be much

obliged to Mrs. Newton if she will order her down a loaf of sugar, from nine pence to ten pence the pound, for the use of my sweet self at breakfast. The sugar merchant, if she will be so kind as to give him the necessary instruction, will be paid by the book-keeper at the inn.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, The last day of 1781.

YESTERDAY'S post, which brought me yours, brought me a packet from Johnson. We have reached the middle of the Mahometan Hog. By the way, your lines, which, when we had the pleasure of seeing you here, you said you would furnish him with, are not inserted in it. I did not recollect, till after I had finished the *Flatting Mill*, that it bore any affinity to the motto taken from Caraccioli. The resemblance, however, did not appear to me to give any impropriety to the verses, as the thought is much enlarged upon, and enlivened by the addition of a new comparison. But if it is not wanted, it is superfluous; and if superfluous, better omitted. I shall not bumble Johnson for finding fault with *Friendship*, though I have a better opinion of it myself; but a poet is, of all men, the most unfit to be judge in his own cause. Partial to all his productions, he is always most partial to the youngest. But as there is a sufficient quantity without it, let that sleep too. If I should live to write again, I may possibly take up that subject a second

time, and clothe it in a different dress. It abounds with excellent matter, and much more than I could find room for in two or three pages.

I consider England and America as once one country. They were so, in respect of interest, intercourse, and affinity. A great earthquake has made a partition, and now the Atlantic ocean flows between them. He that can drain that ocean, and shove the two shores together, so as to make them aptly coincide, and meet each other in every part, can unite them again. But this is a work for Omnipotence, and nothing less than Omnipotence can heal the breach between us. This dispensation is evidently a scourge to England;—but is it a blessing to America? Time may prove it one, but at present it does not seem to wear an aspect favourable to their privileges, either civil or religious. I cannot doubt the truth of Dr. W.'s assertion; but the French, who pay but little regard to treaties that clash with their convenience, without a treaty, and even in direct contradiction to verbal engagements, can easily pretend a claim to a country which they have both bled and paid for; and if the validity of that claim be disputed, behold an army ready landed, and well-appointed, and in possession of some of the most fruitful provinces, prepared to prove it. A scourge is a scourge at one end only. A bundle of thunderbolts, such as you have seen in the talons of Jupiter's eagle, is at both ends equally tremendous, and can inflict a judgement upon the West, at the same moment that it seems to intend only the chastisement of the East.

In my last letter, in which I desired your opinion of Ætna, whether its poetical merits might not atone

for its philosophical defects, I begged the favour of Mrs. Newton to get the silk knitting dyed black. Mrs. Unwin will take care of the hams, but the pig is not likely to bequeath them yet: she is sorry that Mrs. Newton has bespoke them, having one in cure for her at this time. Is very much disappointed that she cannot procure a goose, but has a couple of very fine fowls, which wait your orders, and will be sent at whatever time you shall appoint. She will be glad of a loaf of sugar, the grocer to be paid at the inn.

I should have sent you a longer letter, but a visitor who is more tedious than entertaining has rather disconcerted me, and exhausted my spirits. "Your humble servant, Sir—I hope I see you well.—I thank you, Madam, but indifferent. I have had a violent colic, which providentially took a turn downwards, or I think I must have died. Seven or eight times in a night, Madam. My neighbour Banister has the same disorder, and is remarkably costive, so that I verily fear for his life. Yes truly, I think the poor man cannot get over it." This is a small specimen—how should you like the whole? I can find you a sheet full of the like whenever you please, taken faithfully from his lips.

Our joint love attends you both. We rejoice to hear that Mrs. Newton is better.

Yours, my dear sir,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 5, 1782.

DID I allow myself to plead the common excuse of idle correspondents, and esteem it a sufficient reason for not writing, that I have nothing to write about, I certainly should not write now. But I have so often found, on similar occasions, when a great penury of matter has seemed to threaten me with an utter impossibility of hatching a letter, that nothing is necessary but to put pen to paper, and go on, in order to conquer all difficulties,—that, availing myself of past experience, I now begin with a most assured persuasion, that sooner or later, one idea naturally suggesting another, I shall come to a most prosperous conclusion.

In the last Review, I mean in the last but one, I saw Johnson's critique upon Prior and Pope. I am bound to acquiesce in his opinion of the latter, because it has always been my own. I could never agree with those who preferred him to Dryden; nor with others, (I have known such, and persons of taste and discernment too,) who could not allow him to be a poet at all. He was certainly a mechanical maker of verses, and in every line he ever wrote, we see indubitable marks of the most indefatigable industry and labour. Writers who find it necessary to make such strenuous and painful exertions, are generally as phlegmatic as they are correct; but Pope was, in this respect, exempted from the common lot of authors of that class. With the unwearied application of a plodding Flemish painter, who draws a shrimp with the most minute exactness, he had all the genius of one of the first masters.

Never, I believe, were such talents and such drudgery united. But I admire Dryden most, who has succeeded by mere dint of genius, and in spite of a laziness and carelessness almost peculiar to himself. His faults are numberless, but so are his beauties. His faults are those of a great man, and his beauties are such, (at least sometimes,) as Pope, with all his touching and retouching, could never equal. So far, therefore, I have no quarrel with Johnson. But I cannot subscribe to what he says of Prior. In the first place, though my memory may fail me, I do not recollect that he takes any notice of his Solomon; in my mind the best poem, whether we consider the subject of it, or the execution, that he ever wrote. In the next place, he condemns him for introducing Venus and Cupid into his love-verses, and concludes it impossible his passion could be sincere, because when he would express it he has recourse to fables. But when Prior wrote, those deities were not so obsolete as now. His contemporary writers, and some that succeeded him, did not think them beneath their notice. Tibullus, in reality, disbelieved their existence as much as we do; yet Tibullus is allowed to be the prince of all poetical inamoratos, though he mentions them in almost every page. There is a fashion in these things, which the Doctor seems to have forgotten. But what shall we say of his old fusty-rusty remarks upon Henry and Emma? I agree with him, that morally considered both the knight and his lady are bad characters, and that each exhibits an example which ought not to be followed. The man dissembles in a way that would have justified the woman had she renounced him; and

the woman resolves to follow him at the expense of delicacy, propriety, and even modesty itself. But when the critic calls it a dull dialogue, who but a critic will believe him? There are few readers of poetry of either sex, in this country, who cannot remember how that enchanting piece has bewitched them, who do not know, that instead of finding it tedious, they have been so delighted with the romantic turn of it, as to have overlooked all its defects, and to have given it a consecrated place in their memories, without ever feeling it a burthen. I wonder almost, that, as the Bacchanals served Orpheus, the boys and girls do not tear this husky, dry commentator limb from limb, in resentment of such an injury done to their darling poet. I admire Johnson as a man of great erudition and sense; but when he sets himself up for a judge of writers upon the subject of love, a passion which I suppose he never felt in his life, he might as well think himself qualified to pronounce upon a treatise on horsemanship, or the art of fortification.

The next packet I receive will bring me, I imagine, the last proof sheet of my volume, which will consist of about three hundred and fifty pages honestly printed. My public *entrée* therefore is not far distant.

Had we known that the last cheeses were naught, we would not have sent you these. Your mother has however enquired for and found a better dairy, which she means shall furnish you with cheese another year.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 13, 1782.

HAVING just read yours, I begin to answer it; the basket presenting me with a fair opportunity to save a frank, and my time being entirely at my own disposal, which possibly may not be the case to-morrow. As to Johnson, he sometimes promises fair, and proceeds with tolerable dispatch, so that I begin to flatter myself with the hope of a speedy publication; then comes an interval of three weeks perhaps, and nothing done. It is a fortnight this day since I returned his last packet, and though one more cover may contain all that is yet behind, I know not but another week at least may elapse before he sends it. Then we are to begin again, and the whole is to undergo a second revisal, which, if it proceeds as slowly as the first, will cost another year. In the meanwhile, having some, though not the keenest, feelings of an author, I am not always very well pleased. I suspect that he gives a preference to others who engaged him not so early as myself, and that my distance from the spot is used to my disadvantage. But having other and much weightier cares and concerns to carry, I presently discharge my shoulders of this, and am but little incumbered by it. If it should fall in your way to ask him what he intends, or whether he does not think that we are in some danger of losing the season, considering how much remains to be done, I shall be obliged to you for putting the question to him.

Your answer respecting Ætna is quite satisfact and gives me much pleasure. I hate alt

I never refuse the task when propriety seems to enjoin it; and an alteration in this instance, if I am not mistaken, would have been singularly difficult. Indeed, when a piece has been finished two or three years, and an author finds occasion to amend, or make an addition to it, it is not easy to fall upon the very vein from which he drew his ideas in the first instance; but either a different turn of thought, or expression, will betray the patch, and convince a reader of discernment that it has been cobbled and vamped.

I believe I did not thank you for your anecdotes, either foreign or domestic, in my last, therefore I do it now; and still feel myself, as I did at the time, truly obliged to you for them. More is to be learned from one matter of fact than from a thousand speculations. But, alas! what course can government take? I have heard (for I never made the experiment) that if a man grasp a red-hot iron with his naked hand, it will stick to him, so that he cannot presently disengage himself from it. Such are the colonies in the hands of administration. While they hold them they burn their fingers, and yet they must not quit them. I know not whether your sentiments and mine upon this part of the subject exactly coincide, but you will know, when you understand what mine are. It appears to me, that the King is bound, both by the duty he owes to himself and to his people, to consider himself with respect to every inch of his territories, as a trustee deriving his interest in them from God, and invested with them by divine authority for the benefit of his subjects. As he may not sell them or waste them he may not resign them to an enemy, or tran

right to govern them to any, not even to themselves, so long as it is possible for him to keep it. If he does, he betrays at once his own interest, and that of his other dominions. It may be said, suppose Providence has ordained that they shall be wrested from him, how then? I answer, that cannot appear to be the case, till God's purpose is actually accomplished; and in the mean time the most probable prospect of such an event does not release him from his obligation to hold them to the last moment, for as much as adverse appearances are no infallible indication of God's designs, but may give place to more comfortable symptoms, when we least expect it. Viewing the thing in this light, if I sat on his Majesty's throne, I should be as obstinate as he; because if I quitted the contest, while I had any means left of carrying it on, I should never know that I had not relinquished what I might have retained, or be able to render a satisfactory answer to the doubts and enquiries of my own conscience.

I am rather pleased that you have adopted other sentiments respecting our intended present to the critical Doctor. I allow him to be a man of gigantic talents, and most profound learning, nor have any doubts about the universality of his knowledge. But by what I have seen of his animadversions on the poets, I feel myself much disposed to question, in many instances, either his candour or his taste. He finds fault too often, like a man that, having sought it very industriously, is at last obliged to stick it upon a pin's point, and look at it through a microscope; and I am sure I could easily convict him of having denied

many beauties, and overlooked more. Whether his judgement be in itself defective, or whether it be warped by collateral considerations, a writer upon such subjects as I have chosen would probably find but little mercy at his hands.

We are truly sorry to hear you speak so doubtfully of your journey hither, and hope a substitute will be found: are thankful for a sight of your new convert's letter, and hope it will prove the harbinger of many yet unborn. The sugar has arrived safe, and Mrs. Unwin thanks Mrs. Newton for her care of it. Poor Peggy! one would have hoped she might have been safe from such a rencontre in an hospital. We are glad however that she is better. Be pleased to remember us to Sally.

Mr. Scott will be upon the road to-morrow. Our love to you both, and to the young Euphrosyne; the old lady of that name being long since dead, if she pleases she shall fill her vacant office, and be my Muse hereafter.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, Jan. 17, 1782.

I AM glad we agree in our opinion of King Critic, and the writers on whom he has bestowed his animadversions. It is a matter of indifference to me whether I think with the world at large or not, but I wish my friends to be of my mind. The same work will wear a different appearance in the eyes of the same man,

according to the different views with which he reads it; if merely for his amusement, his candour being in less danger of a twist from interest or prejudice, he is pleased with what is really pleasing, and is not over curious to discover a blemish, because the exercise of a minute exactness is not consistent with his purpose. But if he once becomes a critic by trade, the case is altered. He must then at any rate establish, if he can, an opinion in every mind, of his uncommon discernment, and his exquisite taste. This great end he can never accomplish by thinking in the track that has been beaten under the hoof of public judgement. He must endeavour to convince the world, that their favourite authors have more faults than they are aware of, and such as they have never suspected. Having marked out a writer universally esteemed, whom he finds it for that very reason convenient to depreciate and traduce, he will overlook some of his beauties, he will faintly praise others, and in such a manner as to make thousands, more modest, though quite as judicious as himself, question whether they are beauties at all. Can there be a stronger illustration of all that I have said, than the severity of Johnson's remarks upon Prior, I might have said the injustice? His reputation as an author who, with much labour indeed, but with admirable success, has embellished all his poems with the most charming ease, stood unshaken till Johnson thrust his head against it. And how does he attack him in this his principal fort? I cannot recollect his very words, but I am much mistaken indeed if my memory fails me with respect to the purport of them. "His words," he says, "appear to be forced into

their proper places; there indeed we find them, but find likewise that their arrangement has been the effect of constraint, and that without violence they would certainly have stood in a different order." By your leave, most learned Doctor, this is the most disingenuous remark I ever met with, and would have come with a better grace from Curl or Dennis. Every man conversant with verse-writing knows, and knows by painful experience, that the familiar style is of all styles the most difficult to succeed in. To make verse speak the language of prose, without being prosaic,—to marshal the words of it in such an order as they might naturally take in falling from the lips of an extemporary speaker, yet without meanness, harmoniously, elegantly, and without seeming to displace a syllable for the sake of the rhyme, is one of the most arduous tasks a poet can undertake. He that could accomplish this task was Prior; many have imitated his excellence in this particular, but the best copies have fallen far short of the original. And now to tell us, after we and our fathers have admired him for it so long, that he is an easy writer indeed, but that his ease has an air of stiffness in it, in short, that his ease is not ease, but only something like it, what is it but a self-contradiction, an observation that grants what it is just going to deny, and denies what it has just granted, in the same sentence, and in the same breath? But I have filled the greatest part of my sheet with a very uninteresting subject. I will only say, that as a nation we are not much indebted, in point of poetical credit, to this too sagacious and unmerciful judge; and that for myself in particular, I have reason to rejoice that he

entered upon and exhausted the labours of his office before my poor volume could possibly become an object of them. By the way, you cannot have a book at the time you mention; I have lived a fortnight or more in expectation of the last sheet, which is not yet arrived.

You have already furnished John's memory with by far the greatest part of what a parent would wish to store it with. If all that is merely trivial, and all that has an immoral tendency, were expunged from our English poets, how would they shrink, and how would some of them completely vanish! I believe there are some of Dryden's Fables which he would find very entertaining; they are for the most part fine compositions, and not above his apprehension; but Dryden has written few things that are not blotted here and there with an unchaste allusion, so that you must pick his way for him, lest he should tread in the dirt. You did not mention Milton's Allegro and Penseroso, which I remember being so charmed with when I was a boy that I was never weary of them. There are even passages in the paradisiacal part of the Paradise Lost, which he might study with advantage. And to teach him, as you can, to deliver some of the fine orations made in the Pandæmonium, and those between Satan, Ithuriel, and Zephon, with emphasis, dignity, and propriety, might be of great use to him hereafter. The sooner the ear is formed, and the organs of speech are accustomed to the various inflections of the voice, which the rehearsal of those passages demands, the better. I should think too, that Thomson's Seasons might afford him some useful lessons. At least they would have a tendency to give his ig

and a philosophical turn. I do not forget that he is but a child. But I remember that he is a child favoured with talents superior to his years. We were much pleased with his remarks on your almsgiving, and doubt not but it will be verified with respect to the two guineas you sent us, which have made four Christian people happy. Ships I have none, nor have touched a pencil these three years; if ever I take it up again, which I rather suspect I shall not (the employment requiring stronger eyes than mine), it shall be at John's service.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 2, 1782.

THOUGH I value your correspondence highly on its own account, I certainly value it the more in consideration of the many difficulties under which you carry it on. Having so many other engagements, and engagements so much more worthy of your attention, I ought to esteem it, as I do, a singular proof of your friendship, that you so often make an opportunity to bestow a letter upon me: and this, not only because mine, which I write in a state of mind not very favourable to religious contemplations, are never worth your reading, but especially because, while you consult my gratification and endeavour to amuse my melancholy, your thoughts are forced out of the only channel in which they delight to flow, and constrained into another so different and so little interesting [redacted] like yours, that but for me, and for my

would perhaps never visit it. Though I should be glad therefore to hear from you every week, I do not complain that I enjoy that privilege but once in a fortnight, but am rather happy to be indulged in it so often.

I thank you for the jog you gave Johnson's elbow; communicated from him to the printer it has produced me two more sheets, and two more will bring the business, I suppose, to a conclusion. I sometimes feel such a perfect indifference with respect to the public opinion of my book, that I am ready to flatter myself no censure of reviewers, or other critical readers, would occasion me the smallest disturbance. But not feeling myself constantly possessed of this desirable apathy, I am sometimes apt to suspect, that it is not altogether sincere, or at least that I may lose it just in the moment when I may happen most to want it. Be it however as it may, I am still persuaded that it is not in their power to mortify me much. I have intended well, and performed to the best of my ability; —so far was right, and this is a boast of which they cannot rob me. If they condemn my poetry, I must even say with Cervantes, "Let them do better if they can!"—if my doctrine, they judge that which they do not understand; I shall except to the jurisdiction of the court, and plead, *Coram non judice.* Even Horace could say, he should neither be the plumper for the praise, nor the leaner for the condemnation of his readers; and it will prove me wanting to myself indeed, if, supported by so many sublimer considerations than he was mas[illegible] I cannot sit loose to popularity, whic[illegible]th

where it listeth, and is equally out of our command. If you, and two or three more such as you, say, well done! it ought to give me more contentment than if I could earn Churchill's laurels, and by the same means.

Mr. Raban has spent an hour with us since he received your last, but did not mention it. We are not of his privy council. He knows our sentiments upon some subjects too well to favour us with a very intimate place in his confidence. He is civil indeed, at least not intentionally otherwise, and this is all we can say of him. Some people in our circumstances would hardly say so much. As soon as he is seated, he stretches out his legs at their full length, crosses his feet, folds his arms, reclines his head upon his shoulder, yawns frequently, seems not unwilling to hear and to be entertained, but never opens a subject himself, or assists the conversation with any remarks. This is not always pleasing.

* * * *

George Mayne, whom I suppose you remember, a farmer that lived on the beautiful side of a hill in Weston parish, died last week. If you recollect the man, you recollect too that he made it his principal glory to believe that he and his two mastiffs would come to one and the same conclusion, and that no part of either would survive the grave. Mr. Page attended him, preached his funeral sermon, and informed the largest congregation ever seen at Weston that he converted him. I cannot learn however that any competent judge of the matter has given the tale a moment's credit, or that any better proof of this

wonder has been produced, than that poor George desired to be buried in his pew, to make some amends I suppose, for having never visited it while he lived.

* * * *

Yours, my dear sir,

W. C.

[Parts of this letter have perished.]

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 9, 1782.

I THANK you for Mr. Lowth's verses. They are so good, that had I been present when he spoke them, I should have trembled for the boy, lest the man should disappoint the hopes such early genius had given birth to. It is not common to see so lively a fancy so correctly managed, and so free from irregular exuberances, at so unexperienced an age; fruitful, yet not wanton, and gay without being tawdry. When schoolboys write verse, if they have any fire at all, it generally spends itself in flashes, and transient sparks, which may indeed suggest an expectation of something better hereafter, but deserve not to be much commended for any real merit of their own. Their wit is generally forced and false, and their sublimity, if they affect any, bombast. I remember well when it was thus with me, and when a turgid, noisy, unmeaning speech in a tragedy, which I should now laugh at, afforded me raptures, and filled me with wonder. It is not in general till reading and observation have settled the taste, that we can give the prize to the best writing;

in preference to the worst. Much less are we able to execute what is good ourselves. But Lowth seems to have stepped into excellence at once, and to have gained by intuition, what we little folks are happy, if we can learn at last, after much labour of our own, and instruction of others. The compliments he pays to the memory of King Charles, he would probably now retract, though he be a Bishop, and his Majesty's zeal for episcopacy was one of the causes of his ruin. An age or two must pass, before some characters can be properly understood. The spirit of party employs itself in veiling their faults, and ascribing to them virtues which they never possessed. See Charles's face drawn by Clarendon, and it is a handsome portrait. See it more justly exhibited by Mrs. Macaulay, and it is deformed to a degree that shocks us. Every feature expresses cunning, employing itself in the attainment of tyranny; and dissimulation, pretending itself an advocate for truth.

I have a piece of secret history to communicate which I would have imparted sooner, but that I thought it possible there might be no occasion to mention it at all. When persons for whom I have felt a friendship, disappoint and mortify me by their conduct, or act unjustly towards me, though I no longer esteem them friends, I still feel that tenderness for their character that I would conceal the blemish if I could. But in making known the following anecdote to you, I run no risk of a publication, assured that when I have once enjoined you secrecy, you will observe it.

My letters have already apprized you of that close and intimate connexion that took place between the

lady you visited in Queen Ann Street, and us. Nothing could be more promising, though sudden in the commencement. She treated us with as much unreservedness of communication, as if we had been born in the same house, and educated together. At her departure, she herself proposed a correspondence, and because writing does not agree with your mother, proposed a correspondence with me. This sort of intercourse had not been long maintained, before I discovered, by some slight intimations of it, that she had conceived displeasure at somewhat I had written, though I cannot now recollect it: conscious of none but the most upright inoffensive intentions, I yet apologized for the passage in question, and the flaw was healed again. Our correspondence after this proceeded smoothly for a considerable time, but at length having had repeated occasion to observe that she expressed a sort of romantic idea of our merits, and built such expectations of felicity upon our friendship, as we were sure that nothing human could possibly answer, I wrote to remind her that we were mortal, to recommend it to her not to think more highly of us than the subject would warrant, and intimating that when we embellish a creature with colours taken from our own fancy, and so adorned, admire and praise it beyond its real merits, we make it an idol, and have nothing to expect in the end, but that it will deceive our hopes, and that we shall derive nothing from it but a painful conviction of our error. Your mother heard me read the letter, she read it herself, and honoured it with her warm approbation. But it gave mortal offence; it received indeed an answer, but such an one as I could

by no means reply to; and there ended (for it was impossible it should ever be renewed) a friendship that bid fair to be lasting; being formed with a woman whose seeming stability of temper, whose knowledge of the world, and great experience of its folly, but above all, whose sense of religion, and seriousness of mind, (for with all that gaiety, she is a great thinker,) induced us both, in spite of that cautious reserve that marks our characters, to trust her, to love and value her, and to open our hearts for her reception. It may be necessary to add, that by her own desire I wrote to her under the assumed relation of a brother, and she to me as as my sister.—*Ceu fumus in auras.*

I thank you for the search you have made after my intended motto, but I no longer need it. I have left myself no room for politics, that subject therefore must be postponed to a future letter. Our love is always with yourself and family. We have recovered from the concern we suffered on account of the fracas above mentioned, though for some days it made us unhappy. Not knowing but that she might possibly become sensible in a few days that she had acted hastily and unreasonably, and renew the correspondence herself, I could not in justice apprize you of this quarrel sooner, but some weeks having passed without any proposals of accommodation, I am now persuaded that none are intended, and in justice to you am obliged to caution you against a repetition of your visit.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 16, 1782.

LEST the grumbling strain of my last should have an effect upon you which I did not intend, and occasion you another journey to Johnson's in order that you might inspire him with a little more alacrity in his work, I now write to inform you that he has, for the present at least, silenced all my complaints, by sending me the whole book except the two last sheets, which he gives me reason to expect to-morrow. When I have returned the parcel, which I mean to do by the diligence on Monday, this tedious business, so far as I am concerned in it, will be over; nothing more will then be requisite but to keep the press going till the number he designs are printed, which I suppose will demand no great length of time, as I have heard that the expedition with which they can work off a book, when the press is once set, is wonderful.

Caraccioli says—"There is something very bewitching in authorship, and that he who has once written will write again." It may be so—I can subscribe to the former part of his assertion from my own experience, having never found an amusement, among the many I have been obliged to have recourse to, that so well answered the purpose for which I used it. The quieting and composing effect of it was such, and so totally absorbed have I sometimes been in my rhyming occupation, that neither the past nor the future, (those themes which to me are so fruitful in regret at other times,) had any longer a share in my contemplation. For this reason I wish, and have often wished since

the fit left me, that it would seize me again; but hitherto I have wished it in vain. I see no want of subjects, but I feel a total disability to discuss them. Whether it is thus with other writers, or not, I am ignorant, but I should suppose my case in this respect a little peculiar. The voluminous writers at least, whose vein of fancy seems always to have been rich in proportion to their occasions, cannot have been so unlike, and so unequal to themselves. There is this difference between my poetship and the generality of *them*,—they have been ignorant how much they have stood indebted to an Almighty power, for the exercise of those talents they have supposed their own; whereas I know, and know most perfectly, and am perhaps to be taught it to the last, that my power to think, whatever it be, and consequently my power to compose, is, as much as my outward form, afforded to me by the same hand that makes me in any respect to differ from a brute. This lesson if not constantly inculcated might perhaps be forgotten, or at least too slightly remembered,—an evil of which I am in no danger; for if all that ancient mythologists have invented of a forked hill, a fountain, a god of verse, and his verse inspiring—*cætera desunt.*

W. C.

[Part of this letter has been torn off.]

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 24, 1782.

If I should receive a letter from you to-morrow, you must still remember that I am not in your debt, having paid you by anticipation.—Knowing that you take an interest in my publication, and that you have waited for it with some impatience, I write to inform you that, if it is possible for a printer to be punctual, I shall come forth on the first of March. I have ordered two copies to Stock; one for Mr. John Unwin.—It is possible after all, that my book may come forth without a Preface. Mr. Newton has written, (he could indeed write no other,) a very sensible as well as a very friendly one; and it is printed. But the bookseller, who knows him well, and esteems him highly, is anxious to have it cancelled, and, with my consent first obtained, has offered to negotiate that matter with the author. He judges, that, though it would serve to recommend the volume to the religious, it would disgust the profane, and that there is in reality no need of any Preface at all. I have found Johnson a very judicious man on other occasions, and am therefore willing that he should determine for me upon this.

Having imparted to you an account of the fracas between us and Lady Austen, it is necessary that you should be made acquainted with every event that bears any relation to that incident. The day before yesterday she sent me, by her brother-in-law, Mr. Jones, three pair of worked ruffles, with advice that I should

soon receive a fourth. I knew they were begun before we quarrelled. I begged Mr. Jones to tell her when he wrote next, how much I thought myself obliged, and gave him to understand that I should make her a very inadequate, though the only return in my power, by laying my volume at her feet. This likewise she had previous reason given to expect. Thus stands the affair at present; whether any thing in the shape of a reconciliation is to take place hereafter, I know not; but this I know, that when an amicable freedom of intercourse, and that unreserved confidence which belongs only to true friendship, has been once unrooted, plant it again with what care you may, it is very difficult, if not impossible to make it grow. The fear of giving offence to a temper too apt to take it, is unfavourable to that comfort we propose to ourselves even in our ordinary connexions, but absolutely incompatible with the pleasures of real friendship. She is to spend the summer in our neighbourhood, Lady Peterborough and Miss Mordaunt are to be of the party; the former a dissipated woman of fashion, and the latter a haughty beauty. Retirement is our passion and our delight; it is in still life alone we look for that measure of happiness we can rationally expect below. What have we to do therefore with characters like these? shall we go to the dancing school again? shall we cast off the simplicity of our plain and artless demeanour, to learn, and not in a youthful day neither, the manners of those whose manners at the best are their only recommendation, and yet can in reality recommend them to none, but to people like themselves?

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This would be folly which nothing but necessity could excuse, and in our case no such necessity can possibly obtain. We will not go into the world, and if the world would come to us, we must give it the French answer—*Monsieur et Madame ne sont pas visibles.*

There are but few persons to whom I present my book. The Lord Chancellor is one. I enclose in a packet I send by this post to Johnson a letter to his Lordship which will accompany the volume; and to you I enclose a copy of it, because I know you will have a friendly curiosity to see it. An author is an important character. Whatever his merits may be, the mere circumstance of authorship warrants his approach to persons, whom otherwise perhaps he could hardly address without being deemed impertinent. He can do me no good. If I should happen to do him a little, I shall be a greater man than he. I have ordered a copy likewise to Mr. Robert Smith.

Lord Sandwich has been hard run, but I consider the push that has been made to displace him as the effort of a faction, rather than as the struggle of true patriotism convinced of his delinquency, and desirous to sacrifice him to the interests of the country. Without public virtue public prosperity cannot be long lived, and where must we look for it? It seems indeed to have a share in the motives that animate one or two of the popular party; but grant them sincere, which is a very charitable concession, the rest are evidently naught, and the quantity of salt is too small to season the mass.

I hope John continues to be pleased, and to give

pleasure. If he loves instruction, he has a tutor who can give him plentifully of what he loves; and with his natural abilities his progress must be such as you would wish.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, February, 1782.

IT is not possible for me, as it used to be, to answer a Sunday's letter by the return of the post. It goes out before it comes in. A new and very inconvenient regulation. I am now obliged to get all my despatches ready by nine or ten in the morning. Methinks I express myself like a secretary of state.

I enclose Johnson's upon the subject of the Preface, and would send you my reply to it, if I had kept a copy. This however was the purport of it. That Mr. Bates, whom I described as you described him to me, had made a similar objection, but that being willing to hope, that two or three pages of sensible matter, well expressed, might possibly go down, though of a religious cast, I was resolved to believe him mistaken, and to pay no regard to it. That *his* judgement however, who by his occupation is bound to understand what will promote the sale of a book, and what will hinder it, seemed to deserve more attention. That therefore, according to his own offer written on a small slip of paper now lost, I should be obliged to him if he would state his difficulties to you: adding,

that I need not inform *him*, who is so well acquainted with you, that he would find you easy to be persuaded to sacrifice, if necessary, what you had written, to the interests of the book. I find he has had an interview with you upon the occasion, and your behaviour in it has verified my prediction. What course he determines upon I do not know, nor am I at all anxious about it. It is impossible for me however to be so insensible of your kindness in writing the Preface, as not to be desirous of defying all contingencies rather than entertain a wish to suppress it. It will do me honour in the eyes of those whose good opinion is indeed an honour, and if it hurts me in the estimation of others, I cannot help it; the fault is neither yours nor mine, but theirs. If a minister's is a more splendid character than a poet's, and I think nobody that understands their value can hesitate in deciding that question, then undoubtedly the advantage of having our names united in the same volume is all on my side:—but to say truth, though I may find a transient amusement, I have no sincere pleasure in any thing. Sufficient care is taken by my nightly instructors that I shall not forget my whereabout. Reminded as I am continually, and always knowing it to be true, that I am a foreigner to the system I inhabit, I cannot if I would deceive myself into an opinion that I have any real interest in any thing here. I know that this persuasion would be thought sufficient evidence of frenzy were it produced before a jury under a commission of lunacy; but it is not the less a fact, neither is it to me the least distressing part of it, that it is a fact of which I can convince nobody, because though convinced my-

self, it is impossible I should produce any proof of it; but let this pass—it will be known in due time.

We thank you for the Fast-sermon. I had not read two pages before I exclaimed,—The man has read Expostulation! But though there is a strong resemblance between the two pieces in point of matter, and sometimes the very same expressions are to be met with, yet I soon recollected that, on such a theme, a striking coincidence of both might happen without a wonder. I doubt not that it is the production of an honest man, it carries with it an air of sincerity and zeal, that is not easily counterfeited. But though I can see no reason why kings should not sometimes hear of their faults, as well as other men, I think I see many good ones why they should not be reproved so publicly. It can hardly be done with that respect which is due to their office, on the part of the author, or without encouraging a spirit of unmannerly censure in his readers. His majesty too perhaps might answer —"my own personal feelings and offences I am ready to confess; but were I to follow your advice, and cashier the profligate from my service, where must I seek men of faith, and true Christian piety, qualified by nature and by education to succeed them?" Business must be done, men of business alone can do it, and *good* men are rarely found under that description. When Nathan reproved David, he did not employ a herald, or accompany his charge with the sound of the trumpet; nor can I think the writer of this sermon quite justifiable in exposing the king's faults in the sight of the people.

These two last posts our news has failed us. This

has occasioned our hiring one, and has given us an opportunity to discover that we can be furnished at Olney with six Morning Chronicles in the week, for three shillings and three pence a quarter. We shall be obliged to you therefore if you will pay our London newsmonger, and tell him we have no further need of him.

Daniel Raban has levelled and gravelled the market hill, and because water is scarce at Olney, has put the parish to the expense of a town pump, and designs, in order that people may not run their heads against it in the night, to crown it with a lamp. As the people here are not so rich as to be able to afford superfluities, this measure does not give universal satisfaction. I subjoin the only verses I have written for some time, which however are not to be published. The pump stands opposite Banister's door.

Let Banister now lend his aid
To furnish shoes for the Baker,
Who has put down a pump, with a lamp on its head,
For the use of the said Shoe-maker.

Many thanks for the tongues and the nuts: one of the latter is remarkably fine. The money shall be paid as directed. I enclose a list of my gifted readers, that you may not purchase for those to whom I intend a present. I shall send Lord Dartmouth a card by the present post. We are as ever yours and Mrs. Newton's.

WM. COWPER.

My coach is full. Mr. Jones cannot have a place in it till next time.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March, 6, 1782.

THE tempting occasion of a basket directed to you, seldom fails to produce a letter; not that I have any thing to say, but because I can say any thing, therefore I seize the present opportunity to address you. Some subject will be sure to present itself, and the first that offers shall be welcome.

Is peace the nearer because our patriots have resolved that it is desirable? Will the victory they have gained in the House of Commons be attended with any other consequences than the mortification of the King, the embarrassment of ministry, and perhaps Lord North's resignation? Do they expect the same success on other occasions, and having once gained a majority, are they to be the majority for ever?——These are the questions we agitate by the fireside in an evening, without being able to come to any certain conclusion, partly I suppose because the subject is in itself uncertain, and partly because we are not furnished with the means of understanding it. I find the politics of times past far more intelligible than those of the present. Time has thrown light upon what was obscure, and decided what was ambiguous. The characters of great men, which are always mysterious while they live, are ascertained by the faithful historian, and sooner or later receive their wages of fame or infamy, according to their true deserts. How have I seen sensible and learned men burn incense to the memory of Oliver Cromwell,

ascribing to him, as the greatest hero of the world, the dignity of the British empire during the interregnum. A century passed before that idol, which seemed to be of gold, was proved to be a wooden one. The fallacy however was at length detected, and the honour of that detection has fallen to the share of a woman. I do not know whether you have read Mrs. Macaulay's history of that period. She handled him more roughly than the Scots did at the battle of Dunbar, where, though he gained a victory, he received a wound in his head, that had almost made it his last, and spoiled him for a Protector. He would have thought it little worth his while to have broken through all obligations divine and human, to have wept crocodile tears, and wrapped himself up in the obscurity of speeches that nobody could understand, could he have foreseen that in the ensuing century a lady's scissars would clip his laurels close, and expose his naked villany to the scorn of all posterity. This however has been accomplished, and so effectually, that I suppose it is not in the power of the most artificial management to make them grow again. Even the sagacious of mankind are blind when Providence leaves them to be deluded; so blind, that a tyrant shall be mistaken for a true patriot, true patriots (such were the Long Parliament) shall be abhorred as tyrants, and almost a whole nation shall dream, that they have the full enjoyment of liberty, for years after such a crafty knave as Oliver shall have stolen it completely from them. I am indebted for all this show of historical knowledge to Mr. Bull, who

has lent me five volumes of the work I mention. I was willing to display it while I have it; in a twelvemonth's time I shall remember almost nothing of the matter.

I wrote to Lord Dartmouth to apprize him of my intended present, and have received a very affectionate and obliging answer. But not having received the volume myself, I suppose it is not yet published, though the first of the month was the day fixed for the publication.

No winter since we knew Olney has kept us more closely confined than the present; either the ways have been so dirty or the weather so rough, that we have not more than three times escaped into the fields, since last autumn. This does not suit Mrs. Unwin, to whom air and exercise, her only remedies, are almost absolutely necessary. Neither are my frequent calls into the garden altogether sufficient for me. Man, a changeable creature himself, seems to subsist best in a state of variety, as his proper element. A melancholy man at least is apt to grow sadly weary of the same walls, and the same pales, and to find that the same scene will suggest the same thoughts perpetually.

Mrs. Unwin hopes the chickens will prove good, though not so fat as she generally makes them. She has sent the two guineas for the box, and I the layers and pinks I mentioned. When the bulbs are taken up at Michaelmas, Mrs. Newton shall receive a parcel of all the sorts. Though I have spoken of the utility of changes, we neither feel nor wish for any in our

friendships, and consequently stand just where we did with respect to your whole self. Other friends than you we have none, nor expect any.

Yours, my dear Sir,

WM. COWPER.

The cocoa nuts were equally good, and one of the tongues proved a very fine one; we have not dressed the other.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 7, 1782.

We have great pleasure in the contemplation of your Northern journey, as it promises us a sight of you and yours by the way, and are only sorry that Miss Shuttleworth cannot be of the party. A line to ascertain the hour when we may expect you, by the next preceding post, will be welcome.

We are far from wishing a renewal of the connexion we have lately talked about. We did indeed find it in a certain way an agreeable one while that lady continued in the country, yet not altogether compatible with our favourite plan, with that silent retirement in which we have spent so many years, and in which we wish to spend what are yet before us. She is exceedingly sensible, has great quickness of parts, and an uncommon fluency of expression, but her vivacity was sometimes too much for us; occasionally perhaps it might refresh and revive us, but it more frequently exhausted us, neither your mother nor I

being in that respect at all a match for her. But after all, it does not entirely depend upon us, whether our former intimacy shall take place again or not; or rather whether we shall attempt to cultivate it, or give it over, as we are most inclined to do, in despair. I suspect a little by her sending the ruffles, and by the terms in which she spoke of us to you, that some overtures on her part are to be looked for. Should this happen, however we may wish to be reserved, we must not be rude; but I can answer for us both, that we shall enter into the connexion again with great reluctance, not hoping for any better fruit of it than it has already produced. If you thought she fell short of the description I gave of her, I still think however that it was not a partial one, and that it did not make too favourable a representation of her character. You *must* have seen her to a disadvantage; a consciousness of a quarrel so recent, and in which she had expressed herself with a warmth that she knew must have affronted and shocked us both, must unavoidably have produced its effect upon her behaviour, which though it could not be awkward, must have been in some degree unnatural, her attention being necessarily pretty much engrossed by a recollection of what had passed between us. I would by no means have hazarded you into her company, if I had not been sure that she would treat you with politeness, and almost persuaded that she would soon see the unreasonableness of her conduct, and make a suitable apology.

It is not much for my advantage, that the printer

delays so long to gratify your expectation. It is a state of mind that is apt to tire and disconcert us; and there are but few pleasures that make us amends for the pain of repeated disappointment. I take it for granted you have not received the volume, not having received it myself, nor indeed heard from Johnson, since he fixed the first of the month for its publication.

What a medley are our public prints, half the page filled with the ruin of the country, and the other half filled with the vices and pleasures of it;—here an island taken, and there a new comedy;—here an empire lost, and there an Italian opera, or the Duke of Gloucester's rout on a Sunday!

"May it please your R. H.! I am an Englishman, and must stand or fall with the nation. Religion, its true Palladium, has been stolen away; and it is crumbling into dust. Sin ruins us, the sins of the great especially, and of their sins especially the violation of the sabbath, because it is naturally productive of all the rest. Is it fit that a Prince should make the sabbath a day of dissipation, and that not content with his own personal profanation of it, he should invite all whose rank entitles them to the honour of such distinction, to partake with him in his guilt? Are examples operative in proportion to the dignity of those who set them? Whose then more pernicious than your own in this flagrant instance of impiety? For shame, Sir!—if you wish well to your brother's arms, and would be glad to see the kingdom emerging again from her ruins, pay more respect to an ordinance that deserves the deepest! I do not say pardon this short remon-

strance!——The concern I feel for my country, and the interest I have in its prosperity, give me a right to make it. I am, &c."

Thus one might write to his Highness, and (I suppose) might be as profitably employed in whistling the tune of an old ballàd. Lord P——— had a rout too on the same day.—Is he the son of that P———, who bought Punch for a hundred pounds, and having kept him a week, tore him limb from limb because he was sullen and would not speak?—Probably he is.

I have no copy of the Preface, nor do I know at present how Johnson and Mr. Newton have settled it. In the matter of it there was nothing offensively peculiar. But it was thought too pious.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 14, 1782.

I CAN only repeat what I said some time since, that the world is grown more foolish and careless than it was when I had the honour of knowing it. Though your Preface was of a serious cast, it was yet free from every thing that might, with propriety, expose it to the charge of Methodism, being guilty of no offensive peculiarities, nor containing any of those obnoxious doctrines at which the world is so apt to be angry, and which we must give her leave to be angry at, because we know she cannot help it. It asserted nothing more than every rational creature must admit to be

true,—"that divine and earthly things can no longer stand in competition with each other, in the judgement of any man, than while he continues ignorant of their respective value; and that the moment the eyes are opened, the latter are always cheerfully relinquished for the sake of the former." Now I do most certainly remember the time when such a proposition as this would have been at least supportable, and when it would not have spoiled the market of any volume to which it had been prefixed; *ergo*——the times are altered for the worse.

I have reason to be very much satisfied with my publisher. He marked such lines as did not please him, and as often I could, I paid all possible respect to his animadversions. You will accordingly find, at least if you recollect how they stood in the MS., that several passages are the better for having undergone his critical notice. Indeed I do not know where I could have found a bookseller who could have pointed out to me my defects with more discernment; and as I find it is a fashion for modern bards to publish the names of the literati, who have favoured their works with a revisal, would myself most willingly have acknowledged my obligations to Johnson, and so I told him. I am to thank you likewise, and ought to have done it in the first place, for having recommended to me the suppression of some lines, which I am now more than ever convinced would at least have done me no honour.

I was not unacquainted with Mr. Browne's extraordinary case, before you favoured me with his letter and

his intended dedication to the Queen, though I am obliged to you for a sight of those two curiosities, which I do not recollect to have ever seen till you sent them. I could, however, were it not a subject that would make us all melancholy, point out to you some essential differences between his state of mind and my own, which would prove mine to be by far the most deplorable of the two. I suppose no man would despair, if he did not apprehend something singular in the circumstances of his own story, something that discriminates it from that of every other man, and that induces despair as an inevitable consequence. You may encounter his unhappy persuasion with as many instances as you please, of persons who, like him, having renounced all hope, were yet restored; and may thence infer that he, like them, shall meet with a season of restoration—but it is in vain. Every such individual accounts himself an exception to all rules, and therefore the blessed reverse, that others have experienced, affords no ground of comfortable expectation to *him*. But you will say, it is reasonable to conclude that as all your predecessors in this vale of misery and horror have found themselves delightfully disappointed at last, so will you:—I grant the reasonableness of it; it would be sinful, perhaps, because uncharitable, to reason otherwise; but an argument, hypothetical in its nature, however rationally conducted, may lead to a false conclusion; and in this instance so will yours. But I forbear. For the cause above mentioned, I will say no more, though it is a subject on which I could write more than the mail

would carry. I must deal with you as I deal with poor Mrs. Unwin, in all our disputes about it, cutting all controversy short by an appeal to the event.

MY DEAR MADAM,

We return you many thanks, in the first place for a pot of scallops excellently pickled, and in the second for the snuff-box. We admired it, even when we supposed the price of it two guineas; guess then with what raptures we contemplated it when we found that it cost but one. It was genteel before, but then it became a perfect model of elegance, and worthy to be the desire of all noses.

Your own hams not being dry, Mrs. Unwin begs your acceptance of one of hers, together with a couple of fowls, and would have sent some brocoli, but has none—a reason for not sending it, which, however to be lamented, must yet be allowed a satisfactory one.

Dear Madam,
We are yours and Sir's most
Affectionately and truly
WM. C. AND M. U.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

THE modest terms in which you express yourself on the subject of Lady Austen's commendation embolden me to add my suffrage to hers, and to confirm it by assuring you that I think her just and well founded in her opinion of you. The compliment indeed glances at myself; for were you less than she accounts you,

I ought not to afford you that place in my esteem which you have held so long. My own sagacity therefore and discernment are not a little concerned upon the occasion, for either you resemble the picture, or I have strangely mistaken my man, and formed an erroneous judgement of his character. With respect to your face and figure indeed, there I leave the ladies to determine, as being naturally best qualified to decide the point; but whether you are perfectly the man of sense, and the gentleman, is a question in which I am as much interested as they, and which, you being my friend, I am of course prepared to settle in your favour. The lady (whom, when you know her as well, you will love as much as we do) is, and has been during the last fortnight, a part of our family. Before she was perfectly restored to health, she returned to Clifton. Soon after she came back, Mr. Jones had occasion to go to London. No sooner was he gone, than the *Chateau*, being left without a garrison, was besieged as regularly as the night came on. Villains were both heard and seen in the garden, and at the doors and windows. The kitchen window in particular was attempted, from which they took a complete pane of glass, exactly opposite to the iron by which it was fastened; but providentially the window had been nailed to the wood-work, in order to keep it close, and that the air might be excluded; thus they were disappointed, and being discovered by the maid, withdrew. The ladies being worn out with continual watching, and repeated alarms, were at last prevailed upon to take refuge with us. Men furnished with firearms were put into the house, and the rascals, having intel-

ligence of this circumstance, beat a retreat. Mr. Jones returned; Mrs. Jones and Miss Green, her daughter, left us, but Lady Austen's spirits having been too much disturbed, to be able to repose in a place where she had been so much terrified, she was left behind. She remains with us till her lodgings at the vicarage can be made ready for her reception. I have now sent you what has occurred of moment in our history since my last.

I say amen, with all my heart, to your observation on religious characters. Men who profess themselves adepts in mathematical knowledge, in astronomy, or jurisprudence, are generally as well qualified as they would appear. The reason may be, that they are always liable to detection, should they attempt to impose upon mankind, and therefore take care to be what they pretend. In religion alone, a profession is often slightly taken up, and slovenly carried on, because forsooth candour and charity require us to hope the best, and to judge favourably of our neighbour, and because it is easy to deceive the ignorant, who are a great majority, upon this subject. Let a man attach himself to a particular party, contend furiously for what are properly called evangelical doctrines, and enlist himself under the banner of some popular preacher, and the business is done. Behold a Christian! a Saint! a Phœnix!—In the mean time perhaps his heart, and his temper, and even his conduct, are unsanctified; possibly less exemplary than those of some avowed infidels. No matter!—he can talk,—he has the Shibboleth of the true church,—the Bible in his pocket, and a head well stored with notions. But

the quiet, humble, modest, and peaceable person, who is in his practice what the other is only in his profession, who hates a noise, and therefore makes none, who knowing the snares that are in the world, keeps himself as much out of it as he can, and never enters it, but when duty calls, and even then with fear and trembling, is the Christian that will always stand highest in the estimation of those, who bring all characters to the test of true wisdom, and judge of the tree by its fruit.

You are desirous of visiting the prisoners; you wish to administer to their necessities, and to give them instruction. This task you will undertake, though you expect to encounter many things in the performance of it, that will give you pain. Now *this* I can understand;—you will not listen to the sensibilities that distress yourself, but to the distresses of others. Therefore, when I meet with one of the specious praters above-mentioned, I will send him to Stock, that by your diffidence he may be taught a lesson of modesty; by your generosity, a little feeling for others; and by your general conduct, in short, to chatter less, and to do more.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 18, 1782.

NOTHING has given me so much pleasure, since the publication of my volume, as your favourable opinion of it. It may possibly meet with acceptance from

hundreds, whose commendation would afford me no other satisfaction than what I should find in the hope that it might do them good. I have some neighbours in this place, who say they like it;—doubtless I had rather they should than that they should not,—but I know them to be persons of no more taste in poetry, than skill in the mathematics; their applause therefore is a sound that has no music in it for me. But my vanity was not so entirely quiescent when I read your friendly account of the manner in which it had affected *you*. It was tickled, and pleased, and told me in a pretty loud whisper, that others perhaps of whose taste and judgement I had a high opinion, would approve it too. As a giver of good counsel, I wish to please all;—as an author, I am perfectly indifferent to the judgement of all, except the few who are indeed judicious. The circumstance however in your letter which pleased me most was, that you wrote in high spirits, and though you said much, suppressed more, lest you should hurt my delicacy; my delicacy is obliged to you,—but you observe it is not so squeamish, but that after it has feasted upon praise expressed, it can find a comfortable dessert in the contemplation of praise implied. I now feel as if I should be glad to begin another volume, but from the will to the power is a step too wide for me to take at present, and the season of the year brings with it so many avocations into the garden, where I am my own *fac totum*, that I have little or no leisure for the quill. I should do myself much wrong, were I to omit mentioning the great complacency with which I read your narrative of Mrs. Unwin's smiles and tears; persons of much sen-

sibility are always persons of taste; a taste for poetry depends indeed upon that very article more than upon any other. If she had Aristotle by heart, I should not esteem her judgement so highly, were she defective in point of feeling, as I do and must esteem it, knowing her to have such feelings as Aristotle could not communicate, and as half the readers in the world are destitute of. This it is that makes me set so high a price upon your mother's opinion. She is a critic by nature, and not by rule, and has a perception of what is good or bad in composition, that I never knew deceive her; insomuch, that when two sorts of expression have pleaded equally for the preference, in my own esteem, and I have referred, as in such cases I always did, the decision of the point to her, I never knew her at a loss for a just one.

Whether I shall receive any answer from his Chancellorship or not, is at present *in ambiguo*, and will probably continue in the same state of ambiguity much longer. He is so busy a man, and at this time, if the papers may be credited, so particularly busy, that I am forced to mortify myself with the thought, that both my book and my letter may be thrown into a corner as too insignificant for a statesman's notice, and never found till his executor finds them. This affair however is neither *ad* my *libitum* nor his. I have sent him the truth, and the truth which I know he is ignorant of. He that put it into the heart of a certain eastern monarch, to amuse himself one sleepless night with listening to the records of his kingdom, is able to give birth to such another occasion in Lord Thurlow's instance, and inspire him with a curiosity

to know what he has received from a friend he once loved and valued. If an answer comes however, you shall not long be a stranger to the contents of it.

I have read your letter to their Worships, and much approve of it. May it have the effect it ought! If not, still you have acted an humane and becoming part, and the poor aching toes and fingers of the prisoners will not appear in judgement against you. I have made a slight alteration in the last sentence, which perhaps you will not disapprove.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR SIR, March 24, 1782.

If you had only commended me as a poet, I should have swallowed your praises whole, have smacked my lips, and made no reply; but as you offer me your friendship, and account me worthy of your affection, which I esteem a much greater honour than that of being a poet, though even approved by you, it seems necessary that I should not be quite dumb upon so interesting an occasion.

Your letter gave me great pleasure, both as a testimony of your approbation, and of your regard. I wrote in hopes of pleasing you, and such as you; and though I must confess that, at the same time, I cast a side-long glance at the good liking of the world at large, I believe I can say it was more for the sake of their advantage and instruction than their praise. They are children: if we give them physic, we must sweeten

the rim of the cup with honey. If my book is so far honoured as to be made a vehicle of true knowledge to any that are ignorant, I shall rejoice; and do already rejoice that it has procured me a proof of your esteem, whom I had rather please than all the writers of both Reviews.

When your leisure and your health will allow you to trot over to Olney, you will most assuredly be welcome to us both, and even welcome if you please to light your pipe with the page in question.

Yours, my dear friend, affectionately,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR SIR, Tuesday morning.

BEHOLD the plan of your future operations! which, as I have told Mr. Newton, the man being found who is able to carry it into practice, ought not to be called Utopian. It must be returned to London in the course of the next ten days, by you if you have opportunity to send it; if not, by me. In the latter case you will be so kind as to remit it to Olney in due season.

I have loaded Mr. Dumville with your books, and return you many thanks for the use of them. Mr. Milner's gave me great pleasure, as a sensible, just, and temperate piece of argument. I only regret that, having it in his power to be perfectly correct in his expression, he should suffer any inaccuracies to escape him. Such mistakes in an advocate for the truth, however venial in others, are sure to be marked by the critics, and magnified to the disadvantage of his cause.

I heartily wish you many comfortable whiffs to-day, and every day, especially when you come to whiff in the green-house. Yours,

WM. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 1, 1782.

I COULD not have found a better trumpeter. Your zeal to serve the interest of my volume, together with your extensive acquaintance, qualify you perfectly for that most useful office. Methinks I see you with the long tube at your mouth, proclaiming to your numerous connexions my poetical merits, and at proper intervals levelling it at Olney, and pouring into my ear the welcome sound of their approbation. I need not encourage you to proceed, your breath will never fail in such a cause; and thus encouraged, I myself perhaps may proceed also, and when the versifying fit returns produce another volume. Alas! we shall never receive such commendations from him on the woolsack, as your good friend has lavished upon us. He has great abilities, but no religion. Mr. Hill told him some time since that I was going to publish; to which piece of information, so far as I can learn, he returned no answer; for Mr. Hill has not reported any to me. He had afterwards an opportunity to converse with him in private, but my poor authorship was not so much as mentioned: whence I learn two lessons; first, that however important I may be in my own eyes, I am very insignificant in his; and secondly, that I am never likely to receive any acknowledgement of the

favour I have conferred upon his lordship, either under his own hand, or by the means of a third person; and consequently that our intercourse has ceased for ever, for I shall not have such another opportunity to renew it. To make me amends however for this mortification, Mr. Newton tells me, that my book is likely to run, spread, and prosper; that the grave cannot help smiling, and the gay are struck with the truth of it; and that it is likely to find its way into his Majesty's hands, being put into a proper course for that purpose. Now if the King should fall in love with my Muse, and with you for her sake, such an event would make us ample amends for the Chancellor's indifference, and you might be the first divine that ever reached a mitre from the shoulders of a poet. But, I believe, we must be content, I with my gains, if I gain any thing, and you with the pleasure of knowing that I am a gainer.

Doubt not your abilities for the task which Johnson would recommend to you. The Reviewers are such fiery Socinians that they have less charity for a man of my avowed principles than a Portugueze for a Jew. They may possibly find here and there somewhat to commend, but will undoubtedly reprobate the doctrines, pronounce me a methodist, and by so doing probably check the sale of the volume, if not suppress it. Wherein consists your difficulty? Your private judgement once made public, and the world made acquainted with what you think and what you feel while you read me by the fireside, the business is done, I am reviewed, and my book forwarded in its progress by a judicious recommendation. In return, write a book, and I will be your reviewer; thus we may hold up each other to

public admiration, and turn our friendship to good account. But seriously, I think you perfectly qualified for the undertaking; and if you have no other objection to it than what arises from self-distrust, am persuaded you need only make the experiment in order to confute yourself.

We laughed heartily at your reply to little John's question; and yet I think you might have given him a direct answer—"There are various sorts of cleverness, my dear; I do not know that mine lies in the poetical way, but I can do ten times more towards the entertainment of company in the way of conversation than our friend at Olney. He can rhyme, and I can rattle. If he had my talent, and I had his, we should be too charming, and the world would almost adore us."

I have sowed sallad, in hopes that you will eat it; I have already cut cucumbers, but have no fruit growing at present. Spring onions in abundance. We shall be happy to see you, and hope that nothing will intervene to shorten your stay with us. Our love is with you both, and with all your family. *Bon voyage!*

Yours,

WM. COWPER.

If your short stay in town will afford you an opportunity, I should be glad if you would buy me a genteelish toothpick case. I shall not think half a guinea too much for it; only it must be one that will not easily break. If second-hand, perhaps, it may be the better.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN, AT THE REV. MATTHEW POWLEY'S, DEWSBURY, NEAR WAKEFIELD.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, April 27, 1782.

A PART of Lord Harrington's new-raised corps have taken up their quarters at Olney since you left us. They have the regimental music with them. The men have been drawn up this morning upon the Market-hill, and a concert, such as we have not heard these many years, has been performed at no great distance from our window. Your mother and I both thrust our heads into the coldest east wind that ever blew in April, that we might hear them to greater advantage. The band acquitted themselves with taste and propriety, not *blairing*, like trumpeters at a fair, but producing gentle and elegant symphony, such as charmed our ears, and convinced us that no length of time can wear out a taste for harmony; and that though plays, balls, and masquerades have lost all their power to please us, and we should find them not only insipid but insupportable, yet sweet music is sure to find a corresponding faculty in the soul, a sensibility that lives to the last, which even religion itself does not extinguish. I must pity therefore some good people, (at least some who once were thought such,) who have been fiddled out of all their Christian profession; and having forsaken the world for a time, have danced into it again with all their might. It is a snare from which I myself should find it difficult to escape, were I much in the way of it.

When we objected to your coming for a single night, it was only in the way of argument, and in *hopes* to prevail with you to contrive a longer abode

with us. But rather than not see you at all, we should be glad of you though but for an hour. If the paths should be clean enough, and we are able to walk, (for you know we cannot ride,) we will endeavour to meet you in Weston Park. But I mention no particular hour, that I may not lay you under a supposed obligation to be punctual, which might be difficult at the end of so long a journey. Only if the weather be favourable, you shall find us there in the evening. It is winter in the south, perhaps therefore it may be spring at least, if not summer, in the north: for I have read that it is warmest in Greenland when it is coldest here. Be that as it may, we may hope at the latter end of such an April that the first change of wind will improve the season.

We truly sympathised with you in the distresses you found on the northern side of Wakefield. It is well that the fatigue and the fright together were not too much for Mrs. Unwin. What a boor was he you mention! Cursed is he, says the Scripture, that turneth the blind out of his way, .. a curse that, for aught I know, is fierce enough to singe the beard at least of the wretch who refuses to turn the wanderer into it. You will probably preach at Dewsberry the last Sunday, and if you see this dealer in light money, and this uncivilized savage in the congregation, perhaps you may contrive to tell him so.

The curate's simile Latinized:—

Sors adversa gerit stimulum, sed tendit et alas:
Pungit, api similis, sed, velut ista, fugit.

What a dignity there is in the Roman language! and what an idea it gives us of the good sense and mascu-

line mind of the people that spoke it! The same thought which clothed in English seems childish, and even foolish, assumes a different air in Latin, and makes at least as good an epigram as some of Martial's.

I remember your making an observation, while here, on the subject of parentheses, to which I acceded without limitation; but a little attention will convince us both, that they are not to be universally condemned. When they abound, and when they are long, they both embarrass the sense, and are a proof that the writer's head is cloudy, that he has not properly arranged his matter, or is not well skilled in the graces of expression. But as parenthesis is ranked by grammarians among the figures of rhetoric, we may suppose they had a reason for conferring that honour upon it. Accordingly we shall find that in the use of some of our finest writers, as well as in the hands of the ancient poets and orators, it has a peculiar elegance, and imparts a beauty which the period would want without it.

"Hoc nemus, hunc," inquit, "frondoso vertice collem
(Quis deus incertum est) habitat deus."

VIR. Æn. 8.

In this instance, the first that occurred, it is graceful. I have not time to seek for more, nor room to insert them. But your own observation I believe will confirm my opinion. We have thought of you and talked of you every day since you went, and shall till you return. Our love attends yourself and Mrs. Unwin, John the hider of a tea-kettle not yet found, and your hosts at Dewsbury.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 27, 1782.

RATHER ashamed of having been at all dejected by the censure of the Critical Reviewers, who certainly could not read without prejudice a book replete with opinions and doctrines to which they cannot subscribe, I have at present no little occasion to keep a strict guard upon my vanity, lest it should be too much flattered by the following eulogium. I send it you for the reasons I gave when I imparted to you some other anecdotes of a similar kind, while we were together. Our interests in the success of this same volume are so closely united, that you *must* share with me in the praise or blame that attends it; and sympathising with me under the burthen of injurious treatment, have a right to enjoy with me the cordials I now and then receive, as I happen to meet with more favourable and candid judges.

A merchant, a friend of ours, (you will soon guess him,) sent my Poems to one of the first philosophers, one of the most eminent literary characters, as well as one of the most important in the political world, that the present age can boast of. Now perhaps your conjecturing faculties are puzzled, and you begin to ask, "who, where, and what is he? speak out, for I am all impatience." I will not say a word more, the letter in which he returned his thanks for the present shall speak for him.

SIR, Passy, May 8, 1782.

I received the letter you did me the honour of writing to me, and am much obliged by your kind

present of a book. The relish for reading of poetry had long since left me, but there is something so new in the manner, so easy, and yet so correct in the language, so clear in the expression, yet concise, and so just in the sentiments, that I have read the whole with great pleasure, and some of the pieces more than once. I beg you to accept my thankful acknowledgements, and to present my respects to the author.

I shall take care to forward the letters to America, and shall be glad of any other opportunity of doing what may be agreeable to you, being with great respect for your character,

Your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

We may now treat the critics as the Archbishop of Toledo treated Gil Blas, when he found fault with one of his sermons. His grace gave him a kick, and said, "Begone for a jackanapes, and furnish yourself with a better taste, if you know where to find it."

We are glad that you are safe at home again. Could we see at one glance of the eye what is passing every day upon all the roads in the kingdom, how many are terrified and hurt, how many plundered and abused, we should indeed find reason enough to be thankful for journeys performed in safety, and for deliverance from dangers we are not perhaps even permitted to see. When in some of the high southern latitudes, and in a dark tempestuous night, a flash of lightning discovered to Captain Cook a vessel, which glanced along close by his side, and which, but for the lightning, he must have run foul of, both the danger, and

the transient light that showed it, were undoubtedly designed to convey to him this wholesome instruction, that a particular Providence attended him, and that he was not only preserved from evils, of which he had notice, but from many more of which he had no information, or even the least suspicion. What unlikely contingencies may nevertheless take place! How improbable that two ships should dash against each other, in the midst of the vast Pacific Ocean, and that steering contrary courses, from parts of the world so immensely distant from each other, they should yet move so exactly in a line as to clash, fill, and go to the bottom, in a sea where all the ships in the world might be so dispersed as that none should see another! Yet this must have happened but for the remarkable interference which he has recorded. The same Providence indeed might as easily have conducted them so wide of each other, that they should never have met at all; but then this lesson would have been lost; at least, the heroic voyager would have encompassed the globe without having had occasion to relate an incident that so naturally suggests it.

I am no more delighted with the season than you are. The absence of the sun, which has graced the spring with much less of his presence than he vouchsafed to the winter, has a very uncomfortable effect upon my frame. I feel an invincible aversion to employment, which I am yet constrained to fly to as my only remedy against something worse. If I do nothing, I am dejected; if I do any thing, I am weary; and that weariness is best described by the word lassitude,

which is of all weariness in the world the most oppressive. But enough of myself and the weather.

The blow we have struck in the West Indies will, I suppose, be decisive at least for the present year, and so far as that part of our possessions is concerned in the present conflict. But the news-writers, and their correspondents, disgust me, and make me sick. One victory after such a long series of adverse occurrences has filled them with self-conceit, and impertinent boasting; and while Rodney is almost accounted a methodist, for ascribing his success to Providence, men who have renounced all dependence upon such a friend, without whose assistance nothing can be done, threaten to drive the French out of the sea, laugh at the Spaniards, sneer at the Dutch, and are to carry the world before them. Our enemies are apt to brag, and we deride them for it; but we can sing as loud as they can, in the same key, and no doubt wherever our papers go, shall be derided in our turn. An Englishman's true glory should be, to do his business well, and say little about it; but he disgraces himself when he puffs his prowess as if he had finished his task, when he has but just begun it. Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 12, 1782.

EVERY extraordinary occurrence in our lives affords us an opportunity to learn, if we will, something more of our own hearts and tempers than we were before

aware of. It is easy to promise ourselves beforehand, that our conduct shall be wise, or moderate, or resolute, on any given occasion. But when that occasion occurs, we do not always find it easy to make good the promise: such a difference there is between theory and practice. Perhaps this is no new remark; but it is not a whit the worse for being old, if it be true.

Before I had published, I said to myself—You and I, Mr. Cowper, will not concern ourselves much about what the critics may say of our book. But having once sent my wits for a venture, I soon became anxious about the issue, and found that I could not be satisfied with a warm place in my own good graces, unless my friends were pleased with me as much as I pleased myself. Meeting with their approbation, I began to feel the workings of ambition. It is well, said I, that my friends are pleased, but friends are sometimes partial, and mine, I have reason to think, are not altogether free from bias: methinks I should like to hear a stranger or two speak well of me. I was presently gratified by the approbation of the London Magazine, and the Gentleman's, particularly by that of the former, and by the plaudit of Dr. Franklin. By the way, magazines are publications we have but little respect for, till we ourselves are chronicled in them, and then they assume an importance in our esteem which before we could not allow them. But the Monthly Review, the most formidable of all my judges, is still behind. What will that critical Rhadamanthus say, when my shivering genius shall appear before him? Still he keeps me in hot water, and I must wait another month for

his award. Alas! when I wish for a favourable sentence from that quarter, (to confess a weakness that I should not confess to all,) I feel myself not a little influenced by a tender regard to my reputation here, even among my neighbours at Olney. Here are watchmakers, who themselves are wits, and who at present perhaps think me one. Here is a carpenter, and a baker, and not to mention others, here is your idol Mr. Teedon, whose smile is fame. All these read the Monthly Review, and all these will set me down for a dunce, if those terrible critics show them the example. But oh! wherever else I am accounted dull, dear Mr. Griffith, let me pass for a genius at Olney!

I am glad that Mr. Madan is pleased, and obliged to him for his intercession with Dodsley: 'tis more than I expected. I wish he would publish something that I could approve of in return; but if he does, it must be on some other subject. Had he given an answer, though but a specious one, to the criticisms of the Monthly Review, his perseverance would stand less in need of an excuse: but having hitherto left unnoticed objections that strike at the very root of his project, though most provokingly challenged to refute them if he can, and still persisting in his design, he deserves less to be pitied as a man deceived, than blamed as an obstinate one. What is that quotation from Josephus, or how can it be applied to his purpose? Does it prove that the *converted* Jews were polygamists? No such matter; it has therefore nothing to do with his argument. As little, in my mind, is he assisted by the remark he makes on the 19th of Mat-

thew. "Christ did not condemn; therefore he approved:" to which I reply, *non valet consequentia:* ten thousand enormities prevailed in his day, which he did not condemn by name, but he did not therefore authorize the least of them. And is it not a strange supposition that He should leave his disciples ignorant of what Mr. Madan accounts so great a privilege for eighteen centuries, and at last raise up the gentleman in question to restore it, and him so little qualified after all for the purpose, that he cannot support his doctrine? The Spirit was promised, and the Spirit in due time was given, to lead his disciples into all truth: and the history of the Christian Church proves from the beginning to the present hour, that amongst other truths He has constantly taught them this: that it is unseemly for the followers of so holy a Master to allow themselves more wives than one, a custom for which nothing but the gratification of appetite can be honestly and fairly pleaded. The question is not "Was polygamy lawful to a Jew?" which nobody will dispute; but "is it lawful to a Christian?" Till he can prove the affirmative, towards which he has yet done nothing, he had better be quiet. He only disturbs the peace of families, puts the most valuable part of the sex to the torture, and disgraces himself.

We are sorry for little William's illness. It is however the privilege of infancy to recover almost immediately what it has lost by sickness. We are sorry too for Mr. Thornton's dangerous condition. But he that is well prepared for the great journey cannot enter on it too soon for himself, though his friends will weep at his departure.

Your sister is well, and joins with me and your mother in affectionate remembrance of all at Stock.

We send you a cheese,
In hopes it will please:
If so, your mother
Will send you another.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR SIR, Wednesday, June, 1782.

I AM glad you have read the plan three times with great pleasure; it is a sign that you have pretty well overcome your fears about the execution of it; for fear hath torment, and is therefore incompatible with pleasure.

I would willingly send you the lines that proceed from the lips of my snuff-box, were it possible, but alas! they are no longer in being. I am a severer critic upon myself than you would imagine, and have the singular knack of being out of humour with every thing, or almost every thing I write, when it is about nine days old; accordingly I have used them,—no matter how;—but Bentley himself could not have treated them with more indignity.

I thank you for your kind remembrance of me, and wish always to live in your esteem and affection. I shall do so, no doubt, till you discover, as you will, that I have no right to either.

I would send Mr. ———'s lines, but the letter is lost in a large bundle of others from the same hand,

and I have not time to seek it. Whether it be what I approve myself or not, or whatever it be, I promise you a copy of what I write next; and am, in the mean time, with Mrs. Unwin's and Mrs. Powley's best respects, Yours,

WM. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 16, 1782.

THOUGH some people pretend to be clever in the way of prophetical forecast, and to have a peculiar talent of sagacity, by which they can divine the meaning of a providential dispensation while its consequences are yet in embryo, I do not. There is at this time to be found I suppose in the cabinet, and in both houses, a greater assemblage of able men, both as speakers and counsellors, than ever were contemporary in the same land. A man not accustomed to trace the workings of Providence, as recorded in Scripture, and that has given no attention to this particular subject, while employed in the study of profane history, would assert boldly that it is a token for good, that much may be expected from them, and that the country, though heavily afflicted, is not yet to be despaired of, distinguished as she is by so many characters of the highest class. Thus he would say; and I do not deny that the event might justify his skill in prognostics. God works by means, and in a case of great national perplexity and distress, wisdom and political ability seem to be the only natural means of deliverance. But a mind more religiously inclined, and perhaps a little

tinctured with melancholy, might with equal probability of success, hazard a conjecture directly opposite. Alas! what is the wisdom of man, especially when he trusts in it as the only God of his confidence? When I consider the general contempt that is poured upon all things sacred, the profusion, the dissipation, the knavish cunning of some, the rapacity of others, and the impenitence of all; I am rather inclined to fear that God, who honours himself by bringing human glory to shame, and by disappointing the expectations of those whose trust is in creatures, has signalized the present day as a day of much human sufficiency and strength, has brought together from all quarters of the land the most illustrious men to be found in it, only that he may prove the vanity of idols, and that when a great empire is falling, and he has pronounced a sentence of ruin against it, the inhabitants, be they weak or strong, wise or foolish, must fall with it. I am the rather confirmed in this persuasion, by observing that these luminaries of the state had no sooner fixed themselves in the political heaven, than the fall of the brightest of them shook all the rest. The arch of their power was no sooner struck than the keystone slipped out of its place; those that were closest in connexion with it followed, and the whole building, new as it is, seems to be already a ruin. If a man should hold this language, who could convict him of absurdity? The Marquis of Rockingham is minister; all the world rejoices, anticipating success in war, and a glorious peace. The Marquis of Rockingham is dead; all the world is afflicted, and relapses into its former despondence. What does this prove, but that

the Marquis was their Almighty, and that now he is gone, they know no other? But let us wait a little, they will find another; perhaps the Duke of Portland, or perhaps the unpopular Shelburne, whom they now represent as a devil, may obtain that honour. Thus God is forgot; and when he is, his judgements are generally his remembrancers.

How shall I comfort you upon the subject of your present distress? Pardon me that I find myself obliged to smile at it, because who but yourself would be distressed upon such an occasion? You have behaved politely, and like a gentleman; you have hospitably offered your house to a stranger, who could not, in your neighbourhood at least, have been comfortably accommodated any where else. He, by neither refusing nor accepting an offer that did him too much honour, has disgraced himself, but not you. I think for the future you must be more cautious of laying yourself open to a stranger, and never again expose yourself to incivilities from an archdeacon you are not acquainted with.

Though I did not mention it, I felt with you what you suffered by the loss of Miss Ord. I was only silent because I could minister no consolation to you on such a subject, but what I knew your mind to be already stored with. Indeed, the application of comfort in such cases is a nice business, and perhaps when best managed might as well be let alone. I remember reading many years ago a long treatise on the subject of consolation, written in French; the author's name I forget, but I wrote these words in the margin:—"Special consolation! at least for a Frenchman, who is a

creature the most easily comforted of any in the world!"

We are as happy in Lady Austen, and she in us, as ever;—having a lively imagination, and being passionately desirous of consolidating all into one family, (for she has taken her leave of London,) she has just sprung a project which serves at least to amuse us, and to make us laugh; it is, to hire Mr. Small's house, on the top of Clifton-hill, which is large, commodious, and handsome, will hold us conveniently, and any friends who may occasionally favour us with a visit. The house is furnished; but, if it can be hired without the furniture, will let for a trifle. Your sentiments, if you please, upon this *démarche!*

The word *perhaps* in that passage of your letter, which relates to your correspondence with Mr. Madan, pleased me much. You say, *perhaps you may not write at all*; precisely the very conduct I would recommend to you. I have not seen his letters, but I have heard a character of them, and I dare say a just one. To disapprove them will be offensive, and not to mention them will be to disapprove them. How then can you avoid giving offence, unless you escape by *an archdeaconism*, and decline answering him at all. Indeed, indeed, in his present sentiments, however polite, entertaining, and sensible he may be, he is not a proper connexion for you. Your character is unblemished; permit me to say, keep it so,—and have nothing to do with Thelyphthora or its author.

I send you my last frank. Our best love attends you individually, and all together. I give you a happy change in the season, and myself also.

filled four sides in less time than two would have cost me a week ago; such is the effect of sunshine upon such a butterfly as I am. Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Aug. 3, 1782.

ENTERTAINING some hope that Mr. Newton's next letter would furnish me with the means of satisfying your inquiry on the subject of Dr. Johnson's opinion, I have till now delayed my answer to your last; but the information is not yet come, Mr. Newton having intermitted a week more than usual since his last writing. When I receive it, favourable or not, it shall be communicated to you; but I am not very sanguine in my expectations from that quarter. Very learned and very critical heads are hard to please. He may perhaps treat me with lenity for the sake of my subject and design, but the composition I think will hardly escape his censure. Though all doctors may not be of the same mind, there is one doctor at least, whom I have lately discovered, my professed admirer. He too, like Johnson, was with difficulty persuaded to read, having an aversion to all poetry, except the Night Thoughts; which on a certain occasion, when being confined on board a ship he had no other employment, he got by heart. He was however prevailed upon, and read me several times over; so that if my volume had sailed with him, instead of]
might perhaps have occupied that sh
which he then allotte
Renny, and he lives

It is a sort of paradox, but it is true: we are never more in danger than when we think ourselves most secure, nor in reality more secure than when we seem to be most in danger. Both sides of this apparent contradiction were lately verified in my experience.—Passing from the greenhouse to the barn, I saw three kittens (for we have so many in our retinue) looking with fixed attention at something, which lay on the threshold of a door, coiled up. I took but little notice of them at first; but a loud hiss engaged me to attend more closely, when behold—a viper! the largest I remember to have seen, rearing itself, darting its forked tongue, and ejaculating the aforementioned hiss at the nose of a kitten almost in contact with his lips. I ran into the hall for a hoe with a long handle, with which I intended to assail him, and returning in a few seconds missed him: he was gone, and I feared had escaped me. Still however the kitten sat watching immoveably upon the same spot. I concluded, therefore, that, sliding between the door and the threshold, he had found his way out of the garden into the yard. I went round immediately, and there found him in close conversation with the old cat, whose curiosity being excited by so novel an appearance, inclined her to pat his head repeatedly with her fore foot; with her claws however sheathed, and not in anger, but in the way of philosophical inquiry and examination. To prevent her falling a victim to so laudable an exercise of her talents, I interposed in a moment with the hoe, and performed upon him an act of decapitation, which though not immediately mortal proved so in the end. Had he slid into the passages, where it is dark, or had he, when in the yard, met with no interruption

from the cat, and secreted himself in any of the out-houses, it is hardly possible but that some of the family must have been bitten; he might have been trodden upon without being perceived, and have slipped away before the sufferer could have well distinguished what foe had wounded him. Three years ago we discovered one in the same place, which the barber slew with a trowel.

Our proposed removal to Mr. Small's was, as you suppose, a jest, or rather a joco-serious matter. We never looked upon it as entirely feasible, yet we saw in it something so like practicability, that we did not esteem it altogether unworthy of our attention. It was one of those projects which people of lively imaginations play with, and admire for a few days, and then break in pieces. Lady Austen returned on Thursday from London, where she spent the last fortnight, and whither she was called by an unexpected opportunity to dispose of the remainder of her lease. She has now therefore no longer any connexion with the great city, she has none on earth whom she calls friends but us, and no house but at Olney. Her abode is to be at the vicarage, where she has hired as much room as she wants, which she will embellish with her own furniture, and which she will occupy as soon as the minister's wife has produced another child, which is expected to make its entry in October.

Mr. Bull, a dissenting minister of Newport, a learned, ingenious, good-natured, pious friend of ours, who sometimes visits us, and whom we visited last week, has put into my hands three volumes of French poetry, composed by Madame Guyon;—a quietist say you, and a fanatic, I will have nothing to do with her.

——It is very well, you are welcome to have nothing to do with her, but in the mean time her verse is the only French verse I ever read that I found agreeable; there is a neatness in it equal to that which we applaud with so much reason in the compositions of Prior. I have translated several of them, and shall proceed in my translations, till I have filled a Lilliputian paper-book I happen to have by me, which when filled I shall present to Mr. Bull. He is her passionate admirer, rode twenty miles to see her picture in the house of a stranger, which stranger politely insisted on his acceptance of it, and it now hangs over his parlour chimney. It is a striking portrait, too characteristic not to be a strong resemblance, and were it encompassed with a glory, instead of being dressed in a nun's hood, might pass for the face of an angel.

Our meadows are covered with a winter-flood in August; the rushes with which our bottomless chairs were to have been bottomed, and much hay which was not carried, are gone down the river on a voyage to Ely, and it is even uncertain whether they will ever return. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* I am glad you have found a curate; may he answer! Am happy in Mrs. Bouverie's continued approbation; it is worth while to write for such a reader. Yours,

W. C.

TO LADY AUSTEN.

To watch the storms, and hear the sky
Give all our almanacks the lie;
To shake with cold, and see the plains
In autumn drown'd with wintry rains;

'Tis thus I spend my moments here,
And wish myself a Dutch Mynheer;
I then should have no need of wit,
For lumpish Hollander unfit.
Nor should I then repine at mud,
Or meadows deluged with a flood;
But in a bog live well content,
And find it just my element;
Should be a clod, and not a man,
Nor wish in vain for Sister Ann,
With charitable aid to drag
My mind out of its proper quag;
Should have the genius of a boor,
And no ambition to have more.

MY DEAR SISTER,

You see my beginning. I do not know but in time I may proceed even to the printing of halfpenny ballads —Excuse the coarseness of my paper; I wasted such a quantity before I could accomplish any thing legible, that I could not afford finer. I intend to employ an ingenious mechanic of the town to make me a longer case; for you may observe that my lines turn up their tails like Dutch mastiffs, so difficult do I find it to make the two halves exactly coincide with each other.

We wait with impatience for the departure of this unseasonable flood. We think of you, and talk of you, but we can do no more, till the waters shall subside. I do not think our correspondence should drop because we are within a mile of each other. It is but an imaginary approximation, the flood having in reality as effectually parted us as if the British Channel rolled between us.

Yours, my dear sister, with Mrs. Unwin's best love.

Aug. 12, 1782. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE letter in which this to you was enclosed did not reach me till this afternoon, though dated the twenty-seventh of July, nor did it leave London till yesterday. Mr. Forster, who often takes the charge of Mr. Newton's dispatches to me, no doubt forgot to put it into the post.

I thank you for Madame Guyon, I often spend a morning in translating some select pieces, such as I think may be successfully rendered in English. When time shall serve, you shall have the fruit of my labours.

Mrs. Unwin joins me in best respects to Mrs. Bull, not forgetting the young gentleman. We are as well as these turbulent elements will permit us to be, and in hopes of seeing you once more at Olney,

I remain, your affectionate,

Aug. 14, 1782. WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

Mon aimable et tres cher Ami,

IT is not in the power of chaises or chariots to carry you where my affections will not follow you; if I heard that you were gone to finish your days in the Moon, I should not love you the less; but should contemplate the place of your abode, as often as it appeared in the heavens, and say—Farewell, my friend, for ever! Lost, but not forgotten! Live happy in thy lantern, and smoke the remainder of thy pipes in peace! Thou

art rid of Earth, at least of all its cares, and so far can I rejoice in thy removal; and as to the cares that are to be found in the Moon, I am resolved to suppose them lighter than those below; heavier they can hardly be.

I have never since I saw you failed to enquire of all the few that were likely to inform me, whether you were sick or abroad, for I have long wondered at your long silence and your long absence. I believe it was Mr. Jones who told me that you were gone from home. I suppose, therefore, that you have been at Ramsgate, and upon that condition I excuse you; but you should have remembered, my friend, that people do not go to the seaside to bring back with them pains in the bowels and such weakness and lassitude as you complain of. You ought to have returned ten years younger, with your nerves well braced and your spirits at the top of the weather glass. Come to us, however, and Mrs. Unwin shall add her attentions and her skill to those of Mrs. Bull; and we will give you broth to heal your bowels, and toasted rhubarb to strengthen them, and send you back as brisk and as cheerful as we wish you to be always.

Both your advice and your manner of giving it are gentle and friendly, and like yourself. I thank you for them, and do not refuse your counsel because it is not good, or because I dislike it, but because it is not for me; there is not a man upon earth that might not be the better for it, myself only excepted. Prove to me that I have a right to pray, and I will pray without ceasing; yes, and praise too, even in the belly of this hell, compared with which Jonah's was a palace, a

temple of the living God. But let me add, there is no encouragement in the Scripture so comprehensive as to include my case, nor any consolation so effectual as to reach it. I do not relate it to you, because you could not believe it; you would agree with me if you could. And yet the sin by which I am excluded from the privileges I once enjoyed, you would account no sin, you would even tell me that it was a duty. This is strange;—you will think me mad,—but I am not mad, most noble Festus, I am only in despair, and those powers of mind which I possess are only permitted to me for my amusement at some times, and to acuminate and enhance my misery at others. I have not even asked a blessing upon my food these ten years, nor do I expect that I shall ever ask it again. Yet I love you, and such as you, and determine to enjoy your friendship while I can:—it will not be long, we must soon part for ever.

Madame Guyon is finished, but not quite transcribed. Mrs. Unwin, who has lately been much indisposed, unites her love to you with mine, and we both wish to be affectionately remembered to Mrs. Bull and the young gentleman.

Yours, my friend,

Oct. 27, 1782. WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 4, 1782.

You are too modest; though your last consisted of three sides only, I am certainly a letter in your debt. It is possible that this present writing may prove as

short. Yet, short as it may be, it will be a letter, and make me creditor, and you my debtor. A letter indeed ought not to be estimated by the length of it but by the contents, and how can the contents of any letter be more agreeable than your last?

You tell me that John Gilpin made you laugh tears, and that the ladies at court are delighted with my Poems. Much good may they do them! May they become as wise as the writer wishes them, and then they will be much happier than he! I know there is in the book that wisdom which cometh from above, because it was from above that I received it. May they receive it too! For whether they drink it out of the cistern, or whether it falls upon them immediately from the clouds, as it did on me, it is all one. It is the water of life, which whosoever drinketh shall thirst no more. As to the famous horseman abovementioned, he and his feats are an inexhaustible source of merriment. At least we find him so, and seldom meet without refreshing ourselves with the recollection of them. You are perfectly at liberty to deal with them as you please. *Auctore tantùm anonymo imprimantur;* and when printed, send me a copy.

I congratulate you on the discharge of your duty and your conscience, by the pains you have taken for the relief of the prisoners. You proceeded wisely, yet courageously, and deserved better success. Your labours however will be remembered elsewhere, when you shall be forgotten here; and if the poor folks at Chelmsford should never receive the benefit of them, you will yourself receive it in heaven. It is pity

that men of fortune should be determined to acts of beneficence sometimes by popular whim, or prejudice, and sometimes by motives still more unworthy. The liberal subscription raised in behalf of the widows of the seamen lost in the Royal George was an instance of the former. At least a plain, short, and sensible letter in the newspaper convinced me at the time, that it was an unnecessary and injudicious collection: and the difficulty you found in effectuating your benevolent intentions on this occasion, constrains me to think that had it been an affair of more notoriety than merely to furnish a few poor fellows with a little fuel to preserve their extremities from the frost, you would have succeeded better. Men really pious delight in doing good by stealth: but nothing less than an ostentatious display of bounty will satisfy mankind in general. I feel myself disposed to furnish you with an opportunity to shine in secret. We do what we can. But that *can* is little. You have rich friends, are eloquent on all occasions, and know how to be pathetic on a proper one. The winter will be severely felt at Olney by many, whose sobriety, industry, and honesty, recommend them to charitable notice: and we think we could tell such persons as Mrs. Bouverie, or Mr. Smith, half a dozen tales of distress, that would find their way into hearts as feeling as theirs. You will do as you see good; and we in the mean time shall remain convinced, that you will do your best. Lady Austen will no doubt do something; for she has great sensibility and compassion.

Your mother wishes you to buy her twelve yards of

silk for a gown, from five to seven shillings a yard, and half ell wide. The colour, either ruby, garnet, or *boüe de Paris.*

Yours, my dear Unwin,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

Nov. 5, 1782.

Charissime Taurorum——
Quot sunt, vel fuerunt, vel posthac aliis erunt in annis.

We shall rejoice to see you, and I just write to tell you so. Whatever else I want, I have, at least, this quality in common with publicans and sinners, that I love those that love me, and, for that reason, you in particular. Your warm and affectionate manner demands it of me. And though I consider your love as growing out of a mistaken expectation that you shall see me a spiritual man hereafter, I do not love you much the less for it. I only regret that I did not know you intimately in those happier days, when the frame of my heart and mind was such as might have made a connexion with me not altogether unworthy of you.

I add only Mrs. Unwin's remembrances, and that I am glad you believe me to be, what I truly am,

Your faithful and affectionate,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, Nov. 18, 1782.

On the part of the poor, and on our part, be pleased to make acknowledgments, such as the occasion calls for, to our beneficent friend Mr. Smith. I call him ours, because having experienced his kindness to myself in a former instance, and in the present his disinterested readiness to succour the distressed, my ambition will be satisfied with nothing less. He may depend upon the strictest secrecy; no creature shall hear him mentioned, either now or hereafter, as the person from whom we have received this bounty. But when I speak of him, or hear him spoken of by others, which sometimes happens, I shall not forget what is due to so rare a character. I wish, and your mother wishes it too, that he could sometimes take us in his way to Nottingham; he will find us happy to receive a person whom we must needs account it an honour to know. We shall exercise our best discretion in the disposal of the money; but in this town, where the Gospel has been preached so many years, where the people have been favoured so long with laborious and conscientious ministers, it is not an easy thing to find those who make no profession of religion at all, and are yet proper objects of charity. The profane are so profane, so drunken, dissolute, and in every respect worthless, that to make them partakers of his bounty would be to abuse it. We promise, however, that none shall touch it but such as are miserably poor, yet at the same time industrious and honest, two characters frequently united here, where the most watchful and

unremitting labour will hardly procure them bread. We make none but the cheapest laces, and the price of them is fallen almost to nothing. Thanks are due to yourself likewise, and are hereby accordingly rendered, for waving your claim in behalf of your own parishioners. You are always with them, and they are always, at least some of them, the better for your residence among them. Olney is a populous place, inhabited chiefly by the half-starved and the ragged of the earth, and it is not possible for our small party and small ability to extend their operations so far as to be much felt among such numbers. Accept therefore your share of their gratitude, and be convinced that when they pray for a blessing upon those who have relieved their wants, He that answers that prayer, and when he answers it, will remember his servant at Stock.

I little thought when I was writing the history of John Gilpin, that he would appear in print—I intended to laugh, and to make two or three others laugh, of whom you were one. But now all the world laughs, at least if they have the same relish for a tale ridiculous in itself, and quaintly told, as we have.—Well—they do not always laugh so innocently, or at so small an expense—for in a world like this, abounding with subjects for satire, and with satirical wits to mark them, a laugh that hurts nobody has at least the grace of novelty to recommend it. Swift's darling motto was, *Vive la bagatelle*—a good wish for a philosopher of his complexion, the greater part of whose wisdom, whencesoever it came, most certainly came not from above. *La bagatelle* has no enemy

in me, though it has neither so warm a friend, nor so able a one, as it had in him. If I trifle, and merely trifle, it is because I am reduced to it by necessity—a melancholy, that nothing else so effectually disperses, engages me sometimes in the arduous task of being merry by force. And, strange as it may seem, the most ludicrous lines I ever wrote have been written in the saddest mood, and, but for that saddest mood, perhaps had never been written at all. To say truth, it would be but a shocking vagary, should the mariners on board a ship buffeted by a terrible storm, employ themselves in fiddling and dancing; yet sometimes much such a part act I.

I hear from Mrs. Newton, that some great persons have spoken with great approbation of a certain book. —Who they are, and what they have said, I am to be told in a future letter. The Monthly Reviewers in the mean time have satisfied me well enough.

Yours, my dear William,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, Nov. 30, 1782.

SINCE such is Mr. Smith's desire, we will dispose of the money before the expiration of the year. It is, indeed, already disposed of, except a very small part, which it was our intention to reserve till the increasing severity of the season should call for the application of it. A man and his wife have been made so happy, that they could neither of them sleep for joy. They are perfectly honest, sober, and industrious, but with

all their industry were unable to maintain themselves and five children, without running deeply in debt to the baker. The discharge of this debt, and the additional comfort of some necessary clothing, were blessings so unexpected, that the transports they felt on receiving them are not often equalled.

Your friend, Mr. Teedon, who with all his foibles is a deserving man, so far at least as the strictest honesty and the most laborious attention to his little school, can entitle him to that character, has been very seasonably and substantially relieved. The poor man's writing paper was almost all expended, and not having wherewithal to purchase more, or to pay his small arrears to the stationer, he had fretted himself into a slow fever, which Mr. Smith however has effectually cured, and he stands restored to his former health and sprightliness of conversation. Rent day was likewise near at hand, a formidable era, which I believe his indigence always obliges him to anticipate with horror; but the terrors of it are removed, and the sum of three guineas has performed all these wonders. Our judgement in these matters is, that it is better to give effectual relief to a few than to split a sum into diminutive items, the operation of which is scarcely perceptible among many. We have, however, delivered others from the entanglement of debts which, though small, were to them an insupportable burthen; and by putting a few shillings in their pockets, have encouraged them to undergo the drudgery of their miserable occupations with alacrity and delight. I have been rather circumstantial in my detail, because, though it is certain Mr. Smith would not have entrusted

his bounty to our disposal, had he not had something like an implicit confidence in our discretion, it will perhaps afford him satisfaction to know, with some degree of particularity, in what manner that discretion has been exercised. We have given to none but the honest, the worthy, and consequently, I may add, to none but the truly grateful.

To-morrow I shall expect a letter from Mr. Newton, it is not therefore in my power to give you any information by this post on the subject, which Mrs. Newton touched so lightly. Whether he himself will enlarge upon it is doubtful, being fearful, for wise reasons, of receiving praise, and for the same reasons fearful of communicating it. But as for me, my modesty is in no danger; I have that within which sufficiently guards me against the workings of vanity; no man would think highly of himself, if he believed that his Maker thought meanly of him.

I have a poem upon Friendship, which, for the life of me, I cannot now transcribe; it is at least thirty stanzas in length, each consisting of six lines. On some future occasion, perhaps, I may have more time, and find myself less indolent. At present I can write nothing but a letter, and, to say the truth, am not sorry when I have reached the end of it.

I beg you will mention us handsomely to Mr. Smith and to Mr. and Mrs. Creuzé. Your mother is pretty well; her love attends you.

Yours, my dear friend,

WM. COWPER.

I have written this a week sooner than I need have

done, a discovery I have made this moment; it is possible, therefore, that I may find an opportunity to send you Friendship.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

DOCTOR BEATTIE is a respectable character. I account him a man of sense, a philosopher, a scholar, a person of distinguished genius, and a good writer. I believe him too a Christian; with a profound reverence for the Scripture, with great zeal and ability to enforce the belief of it (both which he exerts with the candour and good manners of a gentleman), he seems well entitled to that allowance; and to deny it him, would impeach one's own right to the appellation. With all these good things to recommend him, there can be no dearth of sufficient reasons to read his writings. You favoured me some years since with one of his volumes, by which I was both pleased and instructed; and I beg that you will send me the new one, when you can conveniently spare it, or rather bring it yourself, while the swallows are yet upon the wing; for the summer is going down apace.

You tell me you have been asked, if I am intent upon another volume? I reply,—not at present, not being convinced that I have met with sufficient encouragement. I account myself happy in having pleased a few, but am not rich enough to despise the many. I do not know what sort of market my commodity has found, but if a slack one, I must beware how I make a second attempt. My bookseller will not be willing

to incur a certain loss; and I can as little afford it. Notwithstanding what I have said, I write, and am even now writing for the press. I told you that I had translated several of the poems of Madame Guyon. I told you too, or I am mistaken, that Mr. Bull designed to print them. That gentleman is gone to the seaside with Mrs. Wilberforce, and will be absent six weeks. My intention is to surprise him at his return with the addition of as much more translation as I have already given him. This however is still less likely to be a popular work than my former. Men that have no religion would despise it; and men that have no religious experience would not understand it. But the strain of simple and unaffected piety in the original is sweet beyond expression. She sings like an angel, and for that very reason has found but few admirers. Other things I write too, as you will see on the other side, but these merely for my amusement[1].

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 11, 1783.

On Thursday evening Mr. Raban drank tea with us; he brought us a barrel of pickled oysters, for which we return our thanks, and the agreeable news of your welfare, in which we rejoice. He arrived brimfull of admiration at the wonderful performances of a certain soothsayer, whom I recollect you mentioned when we

[1] This letter closed with the English and Latin Verses on the loss of the Royal George.

saw you at Olney. I do not, I hope, offend against the law of charity in my judgement of this man; to say truth, I account him rather an object of pity than censure; but as to the intelligence with which he is furnished, it seems to be derived merely from a spirit of divination. We know that, in old time, persons influenced by such a spirit were ready enough to bear testimony to the Apostles and their doctrine, but they refused the testimony and rebuked the spirit. His extraordinary remembrance and application of Scripture therefore do not seem to warrant his pretensions to any higher character than that of a diviner. An opinion I am the more confirmed in when I recollect that he is ambitious to be thought an intimate friend of the Angel Gabriel, and that he calls Christ his Brother and God his Father in a style of familiarity that seems to bespeak no small share of spiritual pride and vanity. Mr. Raban admired his interpretation of some scriptures relating to the day of judgement, and gave him credit for having placed them in a new light; but in our opinion that light was darkness, inasmuch as it was derogatory from the honour of the Judge, and contrary to the tenor of every passage that speaks of him in that office. But perhaps I have a heavier charge than any of these to allege against Mr. Best, or at least his oracle. A woman of most infamous character, too vile for description, had the curiosity to visit him; he examined her palm as usual, and pronounced her little less than an angel. He was even so enamoured of her that he was with——

Cætera desunt.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, Jan. 19, 1783.

NOT to retaliate, but for want of opportunity, I have delayed writing. From a scene of the most uninterrupted retirement, we have passed at once into a state of constant engagement; not that our society is much multiplied,—the addition of an individual has made all this difference. Lady Austen and we pass our days alternately at each other's *chateau*. In the morning I walk with one or other of the ladies, and in the afternoon wind thread. Thus did Hercules, and thus probably did Samson, and thus do I; and were both those heroes living, I should not fear to challenge them to a trial of skill in that business, or doubt to beat them both. As to killing lions, and other amusements of that kind, with which they were so delighted, I should be their humble servant, and beg to be excused.

Having no frank, I cannot send you Mr. Smith's two letters as I intended. We corresponded as long as the occasion required, and then ceased. Charmed with his good sense, politeness, and liberality to the poor, I was indeed ambitious of continuing a correspondence with him, and told him so. Perhaps I had done more prudently had I never proposed it. But warm hearts are not famous for wisdom, and mine was too warm to be very considerate on such an occasion. I have not heard from him since, and have long given up all expectation of it. I know he is too busy a man to have leisure for me, and ought to have recollected it sooner. He found time to do much

good, and to employ us as his agents in doing it, and that might have satisfied me. Though laid under the strictest injunctions of secrecy, both by him, and by you on his behalf, I consider myself as under no obligation to conceal from you the remittances he made. Only, in my turn, I beg leave to request secrecy on your part, because, intimate as you are with him, and highly as he values you, I cannot yet be sure that the communication would please him, his delicacies on this subject being as singular as his benevolence. He sent forty pounds, twenty at a time. Olney has not had such a friend this many a day; nor has there been an instance at any time of a few poor families so effectually relieved, or so completely encouraged to the pursuit of that honest industry by which, their debts being paid, and the parents and children comfortably clothed, they are now enabled to maintain themselves. Their labour was almost in vain before; but now it answers; it earns them bread, and all their other wants are plentifully supplied.

I wish, that by Mr. Bate's assistance, your purpose in behalf of the prisoners may be effectuated. A pen so formidable as his might do much good, if properly directed. The dread of a bold censure is ten times more moving than the most eloquent persuasion. They that cannot feel for others, are the persons of all the world who feel most sensibly for themselves.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Feb. 2, 1783.

I GIVE you joy of the restoration of that sincere and firm friendship between the Kings of England and France, that has been so long interrupted. It is great pity, when hearts so cordially united are divided by trifles. Thirteen pitiful colonies, which the King of England chose to keep, and the King of France to obtain, if he could, have disturbed that harmony which would else, no doubt, have subsisted between those illustrious personages to this moment. If the King of France, whose greatness of mind is only equalled by that of his Queen, had regarded them, unworthy of his notice as they were, with an eye of suitable indifference; or, had he thought it a matter deserving in any degree his princely attention, that they were, in reality, the property of his good friend the King of England; or, had the latter been less obstinately determined to hold fast his interest in them; and could he, with that civility and politeness in which monarchs are expected to excel, have entreated his Majesty of France to accept a bagatelle, for which he seemed to have conceived so strong a predilection, all this mischief had been prevented. But monarchs, alas! crowned and sceptred as they are, are yet but men; they fall out, and are reconciled, just like the meanest of their subjects. I cannot, however, sufficiently admire the moderation and magnanimity of the King of England. His dear friend on the other side of the channel has not indeed taken actual possession of the colonies in question, but he has effectually wrested them out of

the hands of their original owner; who, nevertheless, letting fall the extinguisher of patience upon the flame of his resentment, and glowing with no other flame than that of the sincerest affection, embraces the King of France again, gives him Senegal and Goree in Africa, gives him the islands he had taken from him in the West, gives him his conquered territories in the East, gives him a fishery upon the banks of Newfoundland; and, as if all this were too little, merely because he knows that Louis has a partiality for the King of Spain, gives to the latter an island in the Mediterranean, which thousands of English had purchased with their lives; and, in America, all that he wanted, at least all that he could ask. No doubt there will be great cordiality between this royal trio for the future: and though wars may perhaps be kindled between their posterity, some ages hence, the present generation shall never be witnesses of such a calamity again. I expect soon to hear that the Queen of France, who, just before this rupture happened, made the Queen of England a present of a watch, has, in acknowledgment of all these acts of kindness, sent her also a seal wherewith to ratify the treaty. Surely she can do no less.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 8, 1783.

WHEN I contemplate the nations of the earth, and their conduct towards each other, through the medium of scriptural light, my opinions of them are exactly like your own. Whether they do good or evil, I see them acting under the permission of

that Providence who governs the earth, whose operations are as irresistible as they are silent and unsuspected. So far we are perfectly agreed; and howsoever we may differ upon inferior parts of the subject, it is, as you say, an affair of no great consequence. For instance, you think the peace a better than we deserve, and in a certain sense I agree with you: as a sinful nation we deserve no peace at all, and have reason enough to be thankful that the voice of war is at any rate put to silence. But when I consider the peace as the work of our ministers, and reflect that with more wisdom, or more spirit, they might perhaps, have procured a better, I confess it does not please me. Such another peace would ruin us, I suppose, as effectually as a war protracted to the extremest inch of our ability to bear it. I do not think it just that the French should plunder us, and be paid for doing it; nor does it appear to me that there was an absolute necessity for such tameness on our part, as we discover in the present treaty. We give away all that is demanded, and receive nothing but what was our own before. So far as this stain upon our national honour, and this diminution of our national property, are a judgement upon our iniquities, I submit, and have no doubt but that ultimately it will be found to be judgement mixed with mercy. But so far as I see it to be the effect of French knavery and British despondency, I feel it as a disgrace, and grumble at it as a wrong. I dislike it the more, because the peace-maker has been so immoderately praised for his performance, which is, in my opinion, a contemptible one enough. Had he made the French smart for baseness, I would have praised him too;—a m

should have shown his wisdom by securing some points, at least, for the benefit of his country. A schoolboy might have made concessions. After all, perhaps, the worst consequence of this awkward business will be dissension in the two Houses, and dissatisfaction throughout the kingdom. They that love their country, will be grieved to see her trampled upon; and they that love mischief will have a fair opportunity of making it. Were I a member of the Commons, even with the same religious sentiments as impress me now, I should think it my duty to condemn it.

You will suppose me a politician; but in truth I am nothing less. These are the thoughts that occur to me while I read the newspaper; and when I have laid it down, I feel myself more interested in the success of my early cucumbers, than in any part of this great and important subject. If I see them droop a little, I forget that we have been many years at war; that we have made an humiliating peace; that we are deeply in debt, and unable to pay. All these reflections are absorbed at once in the anxiety I feel for a plant, the fruit of which I cannot eat, when I have procured it. How wise, how consistent, how respectable a creature is man!

Because we have nobody to preach the gospel at Olney, Mr. Chater waits only for a barn, at present occupied by a strolling company; and the moment they quit it, he begins. He is disposed to think the dissatisfied of all denominations may possibly be united under his standard; and that the great work of forming a more extensive and more established interest than any of them, is reserved for him.

Mrs. Unwin thanks Mrs. Newton for her kind letter, and for executing her commissions. She means to answer next week, by the opportunity of a basket of chickens. We truly love you both, think of you often, and one of us prays for you;—the other will, when he can pray for himself.

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 13, and 20, 1785.

In writing to you I never want a subject. Self is always at hand, and self with its concerns is always interesting to a friend.

You may think, perhaps, that having commenced poet by profession, I am always writing verses. Not so. I have written nothing, at least finished nothing, since I published, except a certain facetious history of John Gilpin, which Mr. Unwin would send to the Public Advertiser. Perhaps you might read it without suspecting the author.

My book procures me favours, which my modesty will not permit me to specify, except one which, modest as I am, I cannot suppress,—a very handsome letter from Dr. Franklin at Passy. These fruits it has brought me.

I have been refreshing myself with a walk in the garden, where I find that January (who according to Chaucer was the husband of May) being dead, February has married the widow.

Yours, &c.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, Feb. 20, 1783.

SUSPECTING that I should not have hinted at Dr. Franklin's encomium under any other influence than that of vanity, I was several times on the point of burning my letter for that very reason. But not having time to write another by the same post, and believing that you would have the grace to pardon a little self-complacency in an author on so trying an occasion, I let it pass. One sin naturally leads to another, and a greater; and thus it happens now, for I have no way to gratify your curiosity, but by transcribing the letter in question. It is addressed, by the way, not to me, but to an acquaintance of mine, who had transmitted the volume to him without my knowledge.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

GREAT revolutions happen in this Ant's nest of ours. One emmet of illustrious character and great abilities pushes out another; parties are formed, they range themselves in formidable opposition, they threaten each other's ruin, they cross over and are mingled together, and like the coruscations of the Northern Aurora amuse the spectator, at the same time that by some they are supposed to be forerunners of a general dissolution.

There are political earthquakes as well as natural ones, the former less shocking to the eye, but not

always less fatal in their influence than the latter. The image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was made up of heterogeneous and incompatible materials, and accordingly broken. Whatever is so formed must expect a like catastrophe.

I have an etching of the late Chancellor hanging over the parlour chimney. I often contemplate it, and call to mind the day when I was intimate with the original. It is very like him, but he is disguised by his hat, which, though fashionable, is awkward; by his great wig, the tie of which is hardly discernible in profile; and by his band and gown, which give him an appearance clumsily sacerdotal. Our friendship is dead and buried, yours is the only surviving one of all with which I was once honoured.

Adieu,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 24, 1783.

A WEAKNESS in one of my eyes may possibly shorten my letter, but I mean to make it as long as my present materials, and my ability to write, can suffice for.

I am almost sorry to say that I am reconciled to the peace, being reconciled to it not upon principles of approbation, but necessity. The deplorable condition of the country, insisted on by the friends of administration, and not denied by their adversaries, convinces me that our only refuge under Heaven was in a treaty with which I quarrelled. The treaty in

find less objectionable than I did, Lord Shelburne having given a colour to some of the articles that makes them less painful in the contemplation. But my opinion upon the whole affair is, that now is the time (if indeed there is salvation for the country) for Providence to interpose to save it. A peace with the greatest political advantages would not have healed us; a peace with none may procrastinate our ruin for a season, but cannot ultimately prevent it. The prospect may make all tremble who have no trust in God, and even they that trust may tremble. The peace will probably be of short duration; and, in the ordinary course of things, another war must end us. A great country in ruins will not be beheld with eyes of indifference, even by those who have a better country to look to. But with them all will be well at last.

As to the Americans, perhaps I do not forgive them as I ought; perhaps I shall always think of them with some resentment as the destroyers,—intentionally the destroyers, of this country. They have pushed that point farther than the house of Bourbon could have carried it in half a century. I may be prejudiced against them, but I do not think them equal to the task of establishing an empire. Great men are necessary for such a purpose; and their great men, I believe, are yet unborn. They have had passion and obstinacy enough to do us much mischief; but whether the event will be salutary to themselves or not, must wait for proof. I agree with you, that it is possible America may become a land of extraordinary evangelical light; but, at the same time, I cannot discover

any thing in their new situation peculiarly favourable to such a supposition. They cannot have more liberty of conscience than they had; at least, if that liberty was under any restraint, it was a restraint of their own making. Perhaps a new settlement in church and state may leave them less. Well,—all will be over soon. The time is at hand when an empire will be established that shall fill the earth. Neither statesmen nor generals will lay the foundation of it, but it shall rise at the sound of the trumpet.

Mr. Scott's last child is dead,—died this morning at four o'clock. The great blemish it had in its face made it a desirable thing that it should not live; and a virulent humour, which consumed the flesh from the bones, made it desirable that it should die soon. It lived a little time in a world of which it knew nothing, and is gone to another, in which it is already become wiser than the wisest it has left behind.

Our united thanks both for the worsted and the satin; they are remarkably well dyed; the former arrived in the shape of a pair of breeches.

I am well in body, but with a mind that would wear out a frame of adamant; yet upon *my* frame, which is not very robust, its effects are not discernible. Mrs. Unwin is in health. Accept our unalienable love to you both.

Yours, my dear friend, truly,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 7, 1783.

WHEN will you come and tell us what you think of the peace? Is it a good peace in itself, or a good peace only in reference to the ruinous condition of our country? I quarrelled most bitterly with it at first, finding nothing in the terms of it but disgrace and destruction to Great Britain. But having learned since, that we are already destroyed and disgraced, as much as we can be, I like it better, and think myself deeply indebted to the King of France for treating us with so much lenity. The olive-branch, indeed, has neither leaf nor fruit, but it is still an olive-branch. Mr. Newton and I have exchanged several letters on the subject; sometimes considering, like grave politicians as we are, the state of Europe at large; sometimes the state of England in particular; sometimes the conduct of the House of Bourbon; sometimes that of the Dutch; but most especially that of the Americans. We have not differed perhaps very widely, nor even so widely as we seemed to do; but still we have differed. We have, however, managed our dispute with temper, and brought it to a peaceable conclusion. So far, at least, we have given proof of a wisdom which abler politicians than myself would do well to imitate.

How do you like your northern mountaineers? Can a man be a good Christian that goes without breeches? You are better qualified to solve me this

question than any man I know, having, as I am informed, preached to many of them, and conversed, no doubt, with some. You must know, I love a Highlander, and think I can see in them what Englishmen once were, but never will be again. Such have been the effects of luxury!

You know that I kept two hares. I have written nothing since I saw you but an epitaph on one of them, which died last week. I send you the *first* impression of it.

Believe me, my dear friend,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 7, 1783.

WERE my letters composed of materials worthy of your acceptance, they should be longer. There is a subject upon which they who know themselves interested in it are never weary of writing. That subject is not within my reach; and there are few others that do not soon fatigue me. Upon these, however, I might possibly be more diffuse, could I forget that I am writing to *you*, to whom I think it just as improper and absurd to send a sheet full of trifles, as it would be to allow myself that liberty, were I writing to one of the four Evangelists. But since you measure me with so much exactness, give me leave to [redacted] in your own way. *Your* manuscript [redacted] and I do not reckon *mine* very

margin, it is true; if you did you would have need of their Lilliputian art, who can enclose the creed within the circle of a shilling; for, upon the nicest comparison, I find your paper an inch smaller every way than mine. Were my writing, therefore, as compact as yours, my letters *with* a margin would be as long as yours without one. Let this consideration, added to that of their futility, prevail with you to think them, if not long, yet long enough.

Corporal East has paid us two visits. We thank you for recommending it to him to call: he entertained us agreeably with a very modest, though, at the same time, a very extraordinary narrative of his Christian adventures in the camp. Twice he prayed here, and in his prayers and in his conversation discovered a vein of good sense not common in people of his rank, and a warmth of heart peculiar to persons truly spiritual. The poor fellow, not having received his pay, found himself in some distress, and would have been obliged to have left some part of his slender means in pawn at his quarters, had we not supplied him with half a guinea. He marched for Northampton yesterday.

Yesterday, a body of Highlanders passed through Olney. They are part of that regiment which lately mutinied at Portsmouth. Convinced to a man, that General M—— had sold them to the East India Company, they breathe nothing but vengeance, and swear they will pull down his house in Scotland, as soon as they arrive there. This determination is, no doubt, a very unchristian one; but, as men, if their charge

against the General be well supported, I cannot blame them. The rest of them are quartered at Dunstable, Woburn, and Newport; in all eleven hundred. A party of them, it is said, are to continue some days at Olney. None of their principal officers are with them; either conscious of guilt, or, at least, knowing themselves to be suspected as privy to, and partners in, the iniquitous bargain, they fear the resentment of the corps. The design of government seems to be to break them into small divisions, that they may find themselves, when they reach Scotland, too weak to do much mischief. Forty of them attended Mr. Bull, who found himself singularly happy in an opportunity to address himself to a flock bred upon the Caledonian mountains. He told them he would walk to John O'Groat's house to hear a soldier pray. They are in general so far religious, that they will hear none but evangelical preaching; and many of them are said to be truly so. Nevertheless, General M——'s skull was in some danger among them; for he was twice felled to the ground with the butt-end of a musket. The sergeant-major rescued him, or he would have been for ever rendered incapable of selling Highlanders to the India Company. I am obliged to you for your extract from Mr. Bowman's letter. I feel myself sensibly pleased by the approbation of men of taste and learning; but that my vanity may not get too much to windward, my spirits are kept under by a total inability to renew my enterprises in the poetical way.

We love and respect Mrs. Cunningham, and sympathize with her under her many trials. May she arrive

in safety! The severity of the season will, I suppose, retard her journey. We should rejoice more in your joy on the occasion, did not her visit to London look with an unfavourable aspect upon yours to Olney.

About three weeks since Mrs. Unwin sent you a couple of fowls, and about ten days since a sparerib from her own pig. We do not wish you to thank us for such matters, nor do we even imagine that any are due, every idea of that sort vanishes before the recollection of the many obligations under which you have laid us: but it is always satisfactory to us to know that they have reached you.

We are tolerably well, and love you both.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

When your last letter came, my eye was so much inflamed, that I could not look at your seal. It is better now, and I mean to consider it well when I see it next.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 30, 1783.

THE sturgeon was incomparable, the best we ever had. We like both sturgeon and salmon, but choose the former as the more durable commodity of the two, thanking you at the same time for your bounty.

To dispatch your questions first, which are of more importance than any subject that is likely to occur at present, will be both the civilest and the wisest course. Walnut shells skilfully perforated, and bound over the

eyes, are esteemed a good remedy for squinting; the pupil naturally seeking its light at the aperture, becomes at length habituated to a just position. But to alleviate your anxiety upon this subject, I have heard good judges of beauty declare that they thought a slight distortion of the eye in a pretty face rather advantageous.

The figure, however, cannot be good if the legs do not stand perpendicular to the person; knock-knees, therefore, must be corrected if they can. It is, I suppose, a case of weakness. I should therefore recommend the cold bath as a strengthener, and riding on horseback, as soon as the boy is capable of it, as a means of forcing the knees into their proper line. Their pressure against the saddle will naturally push them outwards, and accordingly you may frequently observe the legs of persons habituated from their infancy to this sort of exercise, curved almost into an arch: witness half the jockeys and postilions in the kingdom. The more the little man is made to turn the point of his toe inward when he is riding, I suppose the better.

You ask me how I like the peace. When a country is exhausted, peace is always preferable to war, and so far I like it, but no farther. Bad, however, as it is, it might be attended with some benefits, which the jarring interests of irreconcileable parties will not suffer us to reap at present. The papers inform us that Lord Bute is at the bottom of all this mischief,—no matter: —if the country is to be visited for its iniquities, there would be discord and anarchy, though Lord Bute were mouldering in the tomb of his ancestors. The

Chancellor, too, is blamed, and perhaps with reason: the nation stands much in need of a political reform, to which he is an enemy, and consequently to all who advise one. A man of his abilities must have great influence, must either do much good or much evil; though wise, he is not infallible, and the errors of wise men are the most pernicious of all. I have found the etching you recommended, and admire it as the express image of a face with which I was once familiar, but his great hat and his long band give him the air of an awkward country parson.

One of my hares is dead—behold his Epitaph [1].

We shall be happy to see you, and Mrs. U. with you, or any part of your family. I hope to be able to find a melon or two.

Yours ever, with our united love,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 5, 1783.

WHEN one has a letter to write, there is nothing more useful than to make a beginning. In the first place, because, unless it be begun, there is no good reason to hope it will ever be ended; and secondly, because the beginning is half the business; it being much more difficult to put the pen in motion at first, than to continue the progress of it, when once moved.

Mrs. Cunningham's illness, likely to prove mortal, and seizing her at such a time, has excited much com-

[1] Printed among the Poems.

passion in my breast, and in Mrs. Unwin's, both for her and her daughter. To have parted with a child she loves so much, intending soon to follow her; to find herself arrested before she could set out, and at so great a distance from her most valued relations, her daughter's life too threatened by a disorder not often curable, are circumstances truly affecting. She has indeed much natural fortitude, and to make her condition still more tolerable, a good Christian hope for her support. But so it is, that the distresses of those who least need our pity excite it most; the amiableness of the character engages our sympathy, and we mourn for persons for whom perhaps we might more reasonably rejoice. There is still however a possibility that she may recover; an event we *must* wish for, though for her to depart would be far better. Thus we would always withhold from the skies those who alone can reach them; at least till we are ready to bear them company.

Last week I had a letter from William Hadland, in very tragical terms soliciting the favour of an old coat, or money to purchase one. I have returned no answer, nor do I at present intend any; partly for the reasons that influenced you to refuse it, and partly because I have heard a very different account of the offence for which he was degraded, from that which his friend East related. I am informed that after the mutiny of the volunteers had been punished by confinement, they were offered their pay and a free pardon, upon condition that they would return to their duty; this was the critical moment which Hadland

raise a contribution for them, that they might still continue obstinate in their refusal, which the want of subsistence would otherwise render difficult, if not impossible. I am the rather inclined to believe this story, because his punishment, which else seems to have been unreasonable and unjust, is thus sufficiently accounted for: certainly they would not flog and degrade him for a mere act of benevolence and compassion; but when he had abetted the mutineers, he made their cause his own, and became even more guilty than the original delinquents.

I did not see Mr. W—— when he was at Olney, or only saw him from the window. What reason he had for excepting *us* out of the number of those he visited, I know not; but we are not sorry that he made the exception. I wish him well, but am glad that he made no appeal or apology to me: the many to whom he made them are not satisfied, nor did even the letter he produced serve him. It professed to be a letter from his wife, but it was written by his son, and therefore had no weight.

I would always close what I write with news from Olney, did Olney furnish any worth communicating; but either it does not, or I have not heard it. The Lower Meeting has found a minister at last, and the people it seems are fond of him. His name I think is Hillyard. While he is new he will be sure to please. Mr. Scott has been ill ever since he returned from Lincolnshire; indeed, he is hardly ever well, and his distempers are of a kind that seem to make his life extremely precarious. He is better, however, within these few days.

Mrs. Unwin will be glad to know what she owes Mrs. Newton for the items mentioned in my last. We are tolerably well; but neither the season nor the wind, which is east, are favourable to our spirits: they always sink in the spring. Assure yourselves that we love you, and believe me,

My dear friend, truly yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 5, 1783.

YOUR letter to Mr. Scott being sent unsealed demands my thanks as it did my perusal. You may suppose I did not hear Mr. Mayor, but I heard *of him*. Mr. Scott and Mr. Chator liked him, the latter especially, who spoke of him at our house in terms of the highest commendation. I found however from the report of others that his sermon would have disgusted me. He not only dwelt upon circumstantials, which is certainly (to use a simile from Horace) as unprofitable an employment as to pluck the hairs out of a horse's tail one by one, but expressed himself with a coarseness quite unworthy of the pulpit. Sin, he said, turns a man upside down, and grace turns a man inside out, then comes sin again, and by a dexterous jerk sets him topsy-turvy. I have formerly attended the Robin Hood Society, but those orators in leathern aprons and woollen night-caps never stooped so low for their rhetorical flowers. How different is that plainness of speech, which a spiritual theme requires, from that vulgar dialect which this gentleman has

mistaken for it! Affectation of every sort is odious, especially in a minister, and more especially an affectation that betrays him into expressions fit only for the mouths of the illiterate. Truth indeed needs no ornament, neither does a beautiful person; but to clothe it therefore in rags when a decent habit was at hand, would be esteemed preposterous and absurd. The best proportioned figure may be made offensive by beggary and filth; and even truths which came down from Heaven, though they cannot forego their nature, may be disguised and disgraced by unsuitable language. It is strange that a pupil of yours should blunder thus. You may be consoled however by reflecting, that he could not have erred so grossly, if he had not totally and wilfully departed both from your instruction and example. Were I to describe your style in two words, I should call it plain and neat, *simplicem munditiis*, and I do not know how I could give it juster praise, or pay it a greater compliment. Certainly therefore the disciple in this particular at least, is not like his master. He that can speak to be understood by a congregation of rustics, and yet in terms that would not offend academical ears, has found the happy medium. This is certainly practicable to men of taste and judgement, and the practice of a few proves it. *Hactenus de concionando.*

Fanny Kitchener brought Mrs. Unwin a letter yesterday of her own writing. It was sensible and well expressed,—much better than the preachment abovementioned. The purport of it was to confess the impropriety of her past conduct, and to entreat Mrs. Unwin's forgiveness of the offence it must have given

her. She spoke with many tears and much feeling, and in the judgement of common charity is truly penitent. Mr. Scott, who I believe is a surgeon that makes more use of the knife than the poultice, had told her there was but little encouragement for sinners of her complexion; but your letter to her healed all and brought her peace. She is very painfully distempered in body, and in hopes of being admitted into the Northampton hospital.

We are truly glad to hear that Miss Cunningham is better, and heartily wish you more promising accounts from Scotland. *Debemur morti nos nostraque.* We all acknowledge the debt, but are seldom pleased when those we love are required to pay it. The demand will find you prepared for it, but not me, though I have had long notice. I watched and longed for it some years, but within the last ten have learnt to fear it.

Our love attends Mrs. Newton. You have both an undiminished share in it.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 12, 1783.

A LETTER written from such a place as this is a creation; and creation is a work for which mere mortal man is very indifferently qualified. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, is a maxim that applies itself in every case where Deity is not concerned. With this view of the matter, I should charge myself with extreme folly for pretending to work without materials, did I not know, that

although nothing should be the result, even That nothing will be welcome. If I can tell you no news, I can tell you at least that I esteem you highly; that my friendship with you and yours is the only balm of my life; a comfort, sufficient to reconcile me to an existence destitute of every other. This is not the language of to-day, only the effect of a transient cloud suddenly brought over me, and suddenly to be removed, but punctually expressive of my habitual frame of mind, such as it has been these ten years.

They that have found a God, and are permitted to worship him, have found a treasure, of which, highly as they may prize it, they have but very scanty and limited conceptions. Take my word for it,—the word of a man singularly well qualified to give his evidence in this matter, who having enjoyed the privilege some years, has been deprived of it more, and has no hope that he shall live to recover it. These are my Sunday morning speculations;—the sound of the bells suggested them, or rather, gave them such an emphasis that they forced their way into my pen, in spite of me; for though I do not often commit them to paper, they are never absent from my mind.

In the Review of last month, I met with an account of a sermon preached by Mr. Paley, at the consecration of his friend, Bishop Law. The critic admires and extols the preacher, and devoutly prays the Lord of the harvest to send forth more such labourers into his vineyard. I rather differ from him in opinion, not being able to conjecture in what respect the vineyard will be benefited by such a measure. He is certainly ingenious, and has stretched his ingenuity to the utter-

most in order to exhibit the church established, consisting of bishops, priests, and deacons, in the most favourable point of view: but an unspiritual, lazy, luxurious hierarchy is too sable a subject for such washing to whiten it. I lay it down for a rule, that when much ingenuity is necessary to gain an argument credit, that argument is unsound at bottom. So is his, and so are all the pretty devices by which he seeks to enforce it. He says first, "that the appointment of various orders in the church is attended with this good consequence, that each class of people is supplied with a clergy of their own level and description, with whom they may live and associate on terms of equality." But in order to effect this good purpose, there ought to be at least three parsons in every parish, one for the gentry, one for the traders and mechanics, and one for the lowest of the vulgar. Neither is it easy to find many parishes, where the laity at large have any society with their minister at all. This therefore is fanciful, and a mere invention. In the next place he says it gives a dignity to the ministry itself, and the clergy share in the respect paid to their superiors. Much good may such participation do them! They themselves know how little it amounts to. The dignity a parson derives from the lawn sleeves and square cap of his diocesan will never endanger his humility.

Pope says truly——

> Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;
> The rest is all but leather or prunello.

Again—"Rich and splendid situations in the church

have been justly regarded as prizes, held out to invite persons of good hopes, and ingenuous attainments." Agreed. But the prize held out in the Scripture is of a very different kind; and our ecclesiastical baits are too often snapped by the worthless, and persons of no attainments at all. They are indeed incentives to avarice and ambition, but not to those acquirements by which only the ministerial function can be adorned, —zeal for the salvation of men, humility, and self-denial.

Mr. Paley and I therefore cannot agree.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

May 26, 1783.

I FEEL for my uncle, and do not wonder that his loss afflicts him. A connexion that has subsisted so many years could not be rent asunder without great pain to the survivor. I hope however and doubt not but when he has had a little more time for recollection, he will find that consolation in his own family, which it is not the lot of every father to be blessed with. It seldom happens that married persons live together so long, or so happily; but this, which one feels oneself ready to suggest as matter of alleviation, is the very circumstance that aggravates his distress; therefore he misses her the more, and feels that he can but ill spare her. It is however a necessary tax which all who live long must pay for their longevity, to lose many whom they would be glad to detain, (perhaps those in whom all

their happiness is centered,) and to see them step into the grave before them. In one respect at least this is a merciful appointment: when life has lost that to which it owed its principal relish, we may ourselves the more cheerfully resign it. I beg you would present him with my most affectionate remembrance, and tell him, if you think fit, how much I wish that the evening of his long day may be serene and happy.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 31, 1783.

You have had but a disagreeable part to perform towards your two visitors, which, though disagreeable, you have performed well. I understand perfectly your reasons for not offering your pulpit to the first; but though I have no doubt of your having withheld it for reasons not less cogent, from the last, I am not equally aware of them. Whether your objections were suggested by his general course of life, or by any particular instance of misconduct, my memory, which is but an indifferent one, does not furnish me with the means of knowing; neither is there any necessity that you should inform me, unless it should happen that you have nothing more important to write about, for I feel myself much disposed to an implicit acquiescence in the propriety of all you do. I recollect but very imperfectly, something that passed at Doctors' Commons, where he shone indeed as he does every where, but so much in the wrong place, that serious and thinking people were rather disgusted

than pleased. If, however, his ministry prospers at home, it is well; and he may find in that circumstance a consolation of which I fear our friend at Epsom cannot so readily avail himself.

We rather rejoice than mourn with you on the occasion of Mrs. Cunningham's death. In the case of believers, death has lost his sting, not only with respect to those he takes away, but with respect to survivors also. Nature indeed will always suggest some causes of sorrow, when an amiable and Christian friend departs; but the Scripture, so many more, and so much more important reasons to rejoice, that on such occasions, perhaps more remarkably than on any other, sorrow is turned into joy. The law of our land is affronted if we say the king dies, and insists on it that he only *demises*. This, which is a fiction, where a monarch only is in question, in the case of a Christian is reality and truth. He only lays aside a body, which it is his privilege to be encumbered with no longer; and instead of dying, in that moment he begins to live. But this the world does not understand, therefore the kings of it must go on *demising* to the end of the chapter, till futurity shall prove that most of them are dead indeed.

Our illustrious visitors from the continent, whatever opinion they may conceive of our *politesse*, in which perhaps they may condescend to think us inferior only to themselves, are likely to entertain but a mean one of our devotion. They will observe, at least, that the sabbath is almost as obsolete in England as in France. I feel something like indignation kindle within me, when the papers tell me that our dukes and our judges,

the legislators who not long since enacted a penalty upon the profanation of that day, themselves profane it, and in a manner the most notorious. The Duchess of Devonshire has amused the world and herself almost as long as the most celebrated lady can expect to do it. They that were infants when she first started in the race of pleasure, are now beginning to engage attention, and will soon elbow that Queen of the revels out of her delightful office. Instead of a girdle there will be a rent, and instead of beauty, baldness. I once knew her Grace of Devonshire's mother well; she is a sensible and discreet woman, so that the daughter has the more to fear, and the less to plead in her excuse. Yet a little while, and she and all such will know that their life was madness.—*Quicquid in buccam venerit, loquor.*

We are well, and shall rejoice to see you at any time. Be assured of our love, and believe me, my dear friend,

Ever yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 3, 1783.

My greenhouse, fronted with myrtles, and where I hear nothing but the pattering of a fine shower and the sound of distant thunder, wants only the fumes of your pipe to make it perfectly delightful. Tobacco was not known in the golden age. So much the worse for the golden age. This age of iron, or lead, would be insupportable without it; and therefore we may

reasonably suppose that the happiness of those better days would have been much improved by the use of it. We hope that you and your son are perfectly recovered. The season has been most unfavourable to animal life; and I, who am merely animal, have suffered much by it.

Though I should be glad to write, I write little or nothing. The time for such fruit is not yet come; but I expect it, and I wish for it. I want amusement; and, deprived of that, have none to supply the place of it. I send you, however, according to my promise to send you every thing, two stanzas composed at the request of Lady Austen. She wanted words to a tune she much admired, and I gave her these on Peace.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, June 8, 1783.

OUR severest winter, commonly called the spring, is now over, and I find myself seated in my favourite recess, the greenhouse. In such a situation, so silent, so shady, where no human foot is heard, and where only my myrtles presume to peep in at the window, you may suppose I have no interruption to complain of, and that my thoughts are perfectly at my command. But the beauties of the spot are themselves an interruption; my attention is called upon by those very myrtles, by a double row of grass pinks just beginning to blossom, and by a bed of beans already in

bloom; and you are to consider it, if you please, as no small proof of my regard, that though you have so many powerful rivals, I disengage myself from them all, and devote this hour entirely to you.

You are not acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Bull, of Newport; perhaps it is as well for you that you are not. You would regret still more than you do, that there are so many miles interposed between us. He spends part of the day with us to-morrow. A dissenter, but a liberal one; a man of letters and of genius; master of a fine imagination, or rather not master of it,—an imagination which, when he finds himself in the company he loves, and can confide in, runs away with him into such fields of speculation, as amuse and enliven every other imagination that has the happiness to be of the party. At other times he has a tender and delicate sort of melancholy in his disposition, not less agreeable in its way. No men are better qualified for companions in such a world as this, than men of such a temperament. Every scene of life has two sides, a dark and a bright one, and the mind that has an equal mixture of melancholy and vivacity is best of all qualified for the contemplation of either; it can be lively without levity, and pensive without dejection. Such a man is Mr. Bull. But—he smokes tobacco. Nothing is perfect,—

Nihil est ab omni
Parte beatum.

I find that your friend Mr. Fytche has lost his cause; and more mortifying still, has lost it by a sin-

Yours most affectionately
in Bull

gle voice. Had I been a peer, he should have been secure of mine; for I am persuaded that if conditional presentations were in fashion, and if every minister held his benefice, as the judges their office, upon the terms of *quamdiu bene se gesserit*, it would be better for the cause of religion, and more for the honour of the Establishment. There ought to be discipline somewhere; and if the Bishops will not exercise it, I do not see why lay patrons should have their hands tied. If I remember your state of the case, (and I never heard it stated but by you,) my reflections upon it are pertinent. It is however long since we talked about it, and I may possibly misconceive it at present: if so, they go for nothing. I understand that he presented upon condition, that if the parson proved immoral or negligent, he should have liberty to call upon him either for his resignation or the penalty. If I am wrong, correct me.

On the other side I send you a something, a song if you please, composed last Thursday—the incident happened the day before[1].

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 13, 1783.

I THANK you for your Dutch communications. The suffrage of such respectable men must have given you much pleasure, a pleasure only to be exceeded by the

[1] Here followed his song of the Rose.

consciousness you had before of having published truth, and of having served a good master by doing so. Mr. Madan, too, I remember had the testimony of a Dutch divine in favour of his Thelyphthora. The only inference is, that Dutch divines are not all alike; and that in Holland, as well as elsewhere, error and heresy can find advocates among those, who by their very function are called upon to root them out.

I have always regretted that your ecclesiastical history went no further; I never saw a work that I thought more likely to serve the cause of truth, nor history applied to so good a purpose. The facts incontestable, the grand observations upon them all irrefragable, and the style, in my judgement, incomparably better than that of Robertson or Gibbon. I would give you my reasons for thinking so, if I had not a very urgent one for declining it: you have no ear for such music, whoever be the performer. What you added, but never printed, is quite equal to what has appeared, which I think might have encouraged you to proceed, though you missed that freedom in writing which you found before. While you were at Olney this was at least possible: in a state of retirement you had leisure, without which I suppose Paul himself could not have written his Epistles. But those days are fled, and every hope of a continuation is fled with them.

The day of Judgement is spoken of not only as a surprise, but a snare—a snare upon all the inhabitants of the earth. A difference indeed will obtain in favour of the godly, which is, that though a snare, a sudden, in some sense an unexpected, and in every sense an

aweful event, yet it will find *them* prepared to meet it. But the day being thus characterised, a wide field is consequently open to conjecture; some will look for it at one period, and some at another; we shall most of us prove at last to have been mistaken, and if any should prove to have guessed aright, they will reap no advantage, the felicity of their conjecture being incapable of proof till the day itself shall prove it. My own sentiments upon the subject appear to me perfectly scriptural, though I have no doubt that they differ totally from those of all who have ever thought about it; being however so singular, and of no importance to the happiness of mankind, and being moreover difficult to swallow, just in proportion as they are peculiar, I keep them to myself.

I am, and always have been, a great observer of natural appearances, but I think not a superstitious one. The fallibility of those speculations which lead men of fanciful minds to interpret Scripture by the contingencies of the day, is evident from this consideration, that what the God of the Scriptures has seen fit to conceal, he will not as the God of Nature publish. He is one and the same in both capacities, and consistent with himself; and his purpose, if he designs a secret, impenetrable, in whatever way we attempt to open it. It is impossible however for an observer of natural phenomena not to be struck with the singularity of the present season. The fogs I mentioned in my last still continue, though till yesterday the earth was as dry as intense heat could make it. The sun continues to rise and set without his rays, and

hardly shines at noon, even in a cloudless sky. At eleven last night the moon was a dull red; she was nearly at her highest elevation, and had the colour of heated brick. She would naturally, I know, have such an appearance looking through a misty atmosphere; but that such an atmosphere should obtain for so long a time, and in a country where it has not happened in my remembrance even in the winter, is rather remarkable. We have had more thunder storms than have consisted well with the peace of the fearful maidens in Olney, though not so many as have happened in places at no great distance, nor so violent. Yesterday morning however at seven o'clock, two fire-balls burst either in the steeple or close to it. William Andrews saw them meet at that point, and immediately after saw such a smoke issue from the apertures in the steeple as soon rendered it invisible. I believe no very material damage happened, though when Joe Green went afterwards to wind the clock, flakes of stone and lumps of mortar fell about his ears in such abundance, that he desisted, and fled terrified. The noise of the explosion surpassed all the noises I ever heard;—you would have thought that a thousand sledge-hammers were battering great stones to powder, all in the same instant. The weather is still as hot, and the air as full of vapour, as if there had been neither rain nor thunder all the summer.

There was once a periodical paper published, called Mist's Journal: a name pretty well adapted to the sheet before you. Misty however as I am, I do not mean to be mystical, but to be understood, like an almanack-

maker, according to the letter. As a poet, nevertheless, I claim, if any wonderful event should follow, a right to apply all and every such post-prognostic, to the purposes of the tragic muse.

Dead ducks cannot travel this weather; they say it is too hot for them, and they shall stink.

Yours and yours,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 17, 1783.

YOUR letter reached Mr. Scott while Mr. Mayor was with him; whether it wrought any change in *his* opinion of that gentleman, as a preacher, I know not; but for my own part I give you full credit for the soundness and rectitude of *yours*, not only because I think highly of your judgement, but because it coincides exactly with that of every judicious person whom I have heard mention him. I believe no man was ever scolded out of his sins. The heart, corrupt as it is, and because it is so, grows angry if it be not treated with some management and good manners, and scolds again. A surly mastiff will bear perhaps to be stroked, though he will growl even under that operation,—but if you touch him roughly, he will bite. There is no grace that the spirit of self can counterfeit with more success than a religious zeal. A man thinks he is fighting for Christ, and he is fighting for his own notions. He thinks that he is skilfully searching the hearts of others, when he is only gratifying the malig-

nity of his own, and charitably supposes his hearers destitute of all grace, that he may shine the more in his own eyes by comparison. When he has performed this notable task, he wonders that they are not converted: "he has given it them soundly, and if they do not tremble, and confess that God is in him of a truth, he gives them up as reprobate, incorrigible, and lost for ever." But a man that loves me, if he sees me in an error, will pity me, and endeavour calmly to convince me of it, and persuade me to forsake it. If he has great and good news to tell me, he will not do it angrily, and in much heat and discomposure of spirit. It is not therefore easy to conceive on what ground a minister can justify a conduct which only proves that he does not understand his errand. The absurdity of it would certainly strike him, if he were not himself deluded.

Mr. Raban was ordained a minister to an Independent congregation at Yardley, on Thursday last. Three ministers attended, and three sermons were preached upon the occasion. Mr. Bull was one of them. The church consists at present of only twenty-five members. He is to have no stipend, and was unanimously chosen. There was a large congregation, and vast numbers went from Olney. I have been informed that Mr. Bull's examination of him was very close, and his own account of himself very affecting. All his own family were present, and all dissolved in tears.

Mr. Hillyard, Mr. Whitford's successor, who came hither from Kimbolton, is very acceptable and much

followed. Though a man of no education, he has taken great pains to inform his mind. He often pronounces a word wrong, but always uses it with propriety. He is never out of temper in the pulpit, but his sermons are experimental, searching, and evangelical. He bids fair consequently for considerable success. A people will always love a minister, if a minister seems to love his people. The old maxim, *Simile agit in simile*, is in no case more exactly verified: therefore you were beloved at Olney, and if you preached to the Chickesaws, and Chachtaws, would be equally beloved by them.

The summer is passing away, and hitherto has hardly been either seen or felt. Perpetual clouds intercept the influences of the sun, and for the most part there is an autumnal coldness in the weather, though we are almost upon the eve of the longest day. We are glad to find that you still entertain the design of coming, and hope that you will bring sunshine with you.

We are well and always mindful of you; be mindful of us, and assured that we love you. Mrs. Unwin is not the less thankful for the cocoa nuts because they were so naught they could not be eaten. If they were bought, the seller was to blame; for which reason I thought it necessary to tell you what they were.

Yours, my dear friend, and Mrs. Newton's
Affectionate

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 20, 1783.

THIS comes accompanied by a letter Mrs. Unwin received from Mrs. Powley; she thought it would please you. I send you the petite piece I promised, not quite so worthy of your notice; but it is yours by engagement, otherwise, I believe you would never have seen it[1].

The ladies are in the greenhouse, and tea waits.

Yours more than I have time to tell you,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 27, 1783.

A FINE morning, though a shady one, has induced me to spend that time in walking which I had devoted to the quill; consequently I send you no letter for Mr. Newton, but am obliged to postpone my answer to his last till the usual opportunity shall arrive. I cannot resist fine weather; and the omission is of no great consequence, both because I have nothing new to communicate, and because I have a frank which will convey that nothing to him gratis. I wish you and yours a pleasant excursion, as pleasant as the season and the scene to which you are going can possibly make it. I shall rejoice to hear from you, and am sufficiently flattered by the recollection, that just after hearing you protest against all letter-writing, I

[1] "The rose had been wash'd (just wash'd in a show'r)."

heard you almost promise to write a letter to me. The journeys of a man like you must all be sentimental journeys, and better worth the recital than Sterne's would have been, had he travelled to this moment.

Adieu, my friend!
Yours,
WM. COWPER.

Mrs. Unwin's love. Send the Review.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 29, 1783.

THE translation of your letters into *Dutch* was news that pleased me *much*. I intended plain prose, but a rhyme obtruded itself, and I became poetical when I least expected it. The Bœotian atmosphere I have breathed these six days past, makes such a sally of genius the more surprising,—so long, in a country not subject to fogs, we have been covered with one of the thickest I remember. We never see the sun but shorn of his beams. The trees are scarce discernible at a mile's distance. He sets with the face of a red-hot salamander, and rises, (as I learn from report,) with the same complexion. Such a phenomenon at the end of June has occasioned much speculation among the *connoscenti* at this place. Some fear to go to bed, expecting an earthquake; some declare that he neither rises nor sets where he did, and assert with great confidence that the day of Judgement is

at hand. This is probable, and I believe it myself, but for other reasons. In the meantime I cannot discover in them, however alarmed, the symptoms even of a temporary reformation. This very Sunday morning the pitchers of all have been carried into Silver End as usual, the inhabitants perhaps judging that they have more than ordinary need of that cordial at such a juncture. It is however, seriously, a remarkable appearance, and the only one of the kind that at this season of the year has fallen under my notice. Signs in the heavens are predicted characters of the last times; and in the course of the last fifteen years I have been a witness of many. The present obfuscation, (if I may call it so,) of all nature may be ranked perhaps among the most remarkable; but possibly it may not be universal; in London at least, where a dingy atmosphere is frequent, it may be less observable.

Pardon a digression which I slipped into at unawares, a transition from Holland to a fog was not unnatural. When you wrote those letters you did not dream that you were designed for an apostle to the Dutch. Yet so it proves, and such among many others are the advantages we derive from the art of printing: an art in which indisputably man was instructed by the same great teacher who taught him to embroider for the service of the sanctuary, and to beat out the cummin,—and which amounts almost to as great a blessing as the gift of tongues, diffusing an author's sentiments upon the noblest subjects through a people.

Mrs. Unwin desires me to send her love, and to

thank Mrs. Newton for all she has done for her. Every thing has arrived safe, and been managed exactly to her mind. In the course of next month she hopes to treat you with a cupple of dux.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 27, 1783.

You cannot have more pleasure in receiving a letter from me, than I should find in writing it, were it not almost impossible in such a place to find a subject.

I live in a world abounding with incidents, upon which many grave, and perhaps some profitable observations might be made; but those incidents never reaching my unfortunate ears, both the entertaining narrative and the reflection it might suggest are to me annihilated and lost. I look back to the past week, and say, what did it produce? I ask the same question of the week preceding, and duly receive the same answer from both,—nothing!—A situation like this, in which I am as unknown to the world, as I am ignorant of all that passes in it, in which I have nothing to do but to think, would exactly suit me, were my subjects of meditation as agreeable as my leisure is uninterrupted. My passion for retirement is not at all abated, after so many years spent in the most sequestered state, but rather increased;—a circumstance I should esteem wonderful to a degree not to be accounted for, considering the condition of my mind, did I not know, that we think as we are made

to think, and of course approve and prefer, as Providence, who appoints the bounds of our habitation, chooses for us. Thus am I both free and a prisoner at the same time. The world is before me; I am not shut up in the Bastille; there are no moats about my castle, no locks upon my gates, of which I have not the key;—but an invisible, uncontrollable agency, a local attachment, an inclination more forcible than I ever felt, even to the place of my birth, serves me for prison-walls, and for bounds which I cannot pass. In former years I have known sorrow, and before I had ever tasted of spiritual trouble. The effect was an abhorrence of the scene in which I had suffered so much, and a weariness of those objects which I had so long looked at with an eye of despondency and dejection. But it is otherwise with me now. The same cause subsisting, and in a much more powerful degree, fails to produce its natural effect. The very stones in the garden-walls are my intimate acquaintance. I should miss almost the minutest object, and be disagreeably affected by its removal, and am persuaded that were it possible I could leave this incommodious nook for a twelvemonth, I should return to it again with rapture, and be transported with the sight of objects which to all the world beside would be at least indifferent; some of them perhaps, such as the ragged thatch and the tottering walls of the neighbouring cottages, disgusting. But so it is, and it is so, because here is to be my abode, and because such is the appointment of *Him* that placed me in it.—

Iste terrarum mihi præter omnes
Angulus ridet.

It is the place of all the world I love the most, not for any happiness it affords me, but because here I can be miserable with most convenience to myself and with the least disturbance to others.

You wonder, and (I dare say) unfeignedly, because you do not think yourself entitled to such praise, that I prefer your style, as an historian, to that of the two most renowned writers of history the present day has seen. That you may not suspect me of having said more than my real opinion will warrant, I will tell you why. In your style I see no affectation. In every line of theirs I see nothing else. They disgust me always, Robertson with his pomp and his strut, and Gibbon with his finical and French manners. You are as correct as they. You express yourself with as much precision. Your words are ranged with as much propriety, but you do not set your periods to a tune. They discover a perpetual desire to exhibit themselves to advantage, whereas your subject engrosses you. They sing, and you say; which, as history is a thing to be said, and not sung, is, in my judgement, very much to your advantage. A writer that despises their tricks, and is yet neither inelegant nor inharmonious, proves himself, by that single circumstance, a man of superior judgement and ability to them both. You have my reasons. I honour a manly character, in which good sense, and a desire of doing good, are the predominant features;—but affectation is an emetic.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR BULL, Aug. 3, 1783.

I BEGAN to despair of you as a correspondent, yet not to blame you for being silent. I am acquainted with Rottingdean and all its charms, the downs, the cliff, and the agreeable opportunities of sauntering that the seaside affords. I knew, besides, that your preachings would be frequent, and allowed an especial force above all to the consideration of your natural indolence; for though diligent and active in your business, you know in your heart that you love your ease, as all parsons do: these weighty causes all concurring to justify your silence, I should have been very unreasonable had I condemned it.

I laughed, as you did, at the alarm taken by your reverend brother of the Establishment, and at his choice of a text by way of antidote to the noxious tendency of your discourses. The text, with a little transposition and variation of the words, would perhaps have come nearer to the truth, and have suited the occasion better.

Instead of exhorting his hearers to hold fast the form of sound words, he should have said the sound of a form, which I take to be a just description of the sermons he makes himself, that have nothing but a sound and a form to recommend them. I rejoice that the bathing has been of use to you; the more you wash the filthier may you be, that your days may be prolonged, and your health more established. Scratching is good exercise, promotes the circulation, elicits the humours, and if you will take a certain monarch's

word, of itching memory, is too great a pleasure for a subject.

I was always an admirer of thunder-storms, even before I knew whose voice I heard in them; but especially an admirer of thunder rolling over the great waters. There is something singularly majestic in the sound of it at sea, where the eye and the ear have uninterrupted opportunity of observation, and the concavity above being made spacious reflects it with more advantage. I have consequently envied you your situation, and the enjoyment of those refreshing breezes that belong to it. We have indeed been regaled with some of these bursts of ethereal music.—The peals have been as loud, by the report of a gentleman who lived many years in the West Indies, as were ever heard in those islands, and the flashes as splendid. But when the thunder preaches, an horizon bounded by the ocean is the only sounding-board.

I have but little leisure, strange as it may seem; that little I devoted for a month after your departure to the translation of Madame Guyon. I have made fair copies of all the pieces I have produced upon this last occasion, and will put them into your hands when we meet. They are yours, to serve you as you please; you may take and leave as you like, for my purpose is already served. They have amused me, and I have no further demands upon them. The lines upon Friendship however, which were not sufficiently of a piece with the others, will not now be wanted. I have some other little things which I will communicate when time shall serve, but I cannot now transcribe them.

Mrs. Unwin is well, and begs to be affectionately remembered to you and yours. I wish you many smugglers to shine in your crown of rejoicing on a certain day that approaches, and would take the trade myself if I could suppose it might be the means of introducing me to a place amongst them; but I must neither wear a crown, nor help to adorn one.

Yours, my dear friend,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I RECEIVED your letter on the first. I answer on the third. You leave Lymington on the sixth, and will consequently be at home when you receive my answer. I shall not therefore be very prolix, writing as I do, under the expectation and hope that we shall see you soon.

We are both indebted and obliged to you for your journal of occurrences, and are glad that there is not one amongst them for which *you* have reason to be sorry. Your seaside situation, your beautiful prospects, your fine rides, and the sight of the palaces which you have seen, we have not envied you; but are glad that you have enjoyed them. Why should we envy any man? Is not our greenhouse a cabinet of perfumes? It is at this moment fronted with carnations and balsalms, with mignionette and roses, with jessamine and woodbine, and wants nothing but your pipe to make it truly Arabian;—a wilderness of sweets! The Sofa is ended, but not finished;

dox, which your natural acumen, sharpened by habits of logical attention, will enable you to reconcile in a moment. Do not imagine, however, that I lounge over it;—on the contrary I find it severe exercise, to mould and fashion it to my mind!

Let us see you as soon as possible; present our affectionate respects to your family, and tell the Welshman and his chum that if they do not behave themselves well, I will lash them soundly; they will not be the first academics to whom I have shown no mercy.

Yours, with Mrs. Unwin's love,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, August 4, 1783.

I FEEL myself sensibly obliged by the interest you take in the success of my productions. Your feelings upon the subject are such as I should have myself, had I an opportunity of calling Johnson aside to make the enquiry you purpose. But I am pretty well prepared for the worst, and so long as I have the opinion of a few capable judges in my favour, and am thereby convinced that I have neither disgraced myself nor my subject, shall not feel myself disposed to any extreme anxiety about the sale. To aim with success at the spiritual good of mankind, and to become popular by writing on scriptural subjects, were an unreasonable ambition, even for a poet to entertain, in days like these. Verse may have many charms, but has none powerful enough to conquer the aversion pated age to such instruction. Ask

fore boldly, and be not mortified even though he should shake his head, and drop his chin; for it is no more than we have reason to expect. We will lay the fault upon the vice of the times, and we will acquit the poet.

I am glad you were pleased with my Latin ode, and indeed with my English dirge, as much as I was myself. The tune laid me under a disadvantage, obliging me to write in Alexandrines; which I suppose would suit no ear but a French one; neither did I intend any thing more than that the subject and the words should be sufficiently accommodated to the music. The ballad is a species of poetry, I believe, peculiar to this country, equally adapted to the drollest and the most tragical subjects. Simplicity and ease are its proper characteristics. Our forefathers excelled in it; but we moderns have lost the art. It is observed, that we have few good English odes. But to make amends, we have many excellent ballads, not inferior perhaps in true poetical merit to some of the very best odes that the Greek or Latin languages have to boast of. It it a sort of composition I was ever fond of, and if graver matters had not called me another way, should have addicted myself to it more than to any other. I inherit a taste for it from my father, who succeeded well in it himself, and who lived at a time when the best pieces in that way were produced. What can be prettier than Gay's ballad, or rather Swift's, Arbuthnot's, Pope's, and Gay's, in the What do ye call it— "'Twas when the seas were roaring?" I have been well informed that they all contributed, and that the most celebrated association of clever fellows this

country ever saw did not think it beneath them to unite their strength and abilities in the composition of a song. The success however answered to their wishes, and our puny days will never produce such another. The ballads that Bourne has translated, beautiful in themselves, are still more beautiful in his version of them, infinitely surpassing, in my judgement, all that Ovid or Tibullus have left behind them. They are quite as elegant, and far more touching and pathetic than the tenderest strokes of either.

So much for ballads, and ballad writers. "A worthy subject," you will say, "for a man whose head might be filled with better things;"—and *it is* filled with better things, but to so ill a purpose, that I thrust into it all manner of topics that may prove more amusing; as for instance, I have two goldfinches, which in the summer occupy the greenhouse. A few days since, being employed in cleaning out their cages, I placed that which I had in hand upon the table, while the other hung against the wall: the windows and the doors stood wide open. I went to fill the fountain at the pump, and on my return was not a little surprised to find a goldfinch sitting on the top of the cage I had been cleaning, and singing to and kissing the goldfinch within. I approached him, and he discovered no fear; still nearer, and he discovered none. I advanced my hand towards him, and he took no notice of it. I seized him, and supposed I had caught a new bird, but casting my eye upon the other cage perceived my mistake. Its inhabitant, during my absence, had contrived to find an opening, where the wire had been a little bent, and made no other use of the escape it

afforded him, than to salute his friend, and to converse with him more intimately than he had done before. I returned him to his proper mansion, but in vain. In less than a minute he had thrust his little person through the aperture again, and again perched upon his neighbour's cage, kissing him, as at the first, and singing, as if transported with the fortunate adventure. I could not but respect such friendship, as for the sake of its gratification had twice declined an opportunity to be free, and, consenting to their union, resolved that for the future one cage should hold them both. I am glad of such incidents; for at a pinch, and when I need entertainment, the versification of them serves to divert me.

I hope you will receive a very fine melon, which we send according to your last direction: it will leave this place on Wednesday.

I transcribe for you a piece of Madam Guyon, not as the best, but as being shorter than many, and as good as most of them.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 7, 1783.

So long a silence needs an apology. I have been hindered by a three-weeks visit from our Hoxton friends, and by a cold, and feverish complaint, which are but just removed. A foggy summer is likely to be attended with a sickly autumn; such multitudes are indisposed by fevers in this country, that the farmers

have with difficulty gathered in their harvest, the labourers having been almost every day carried out of the field incapable of work; and many die.

The French poetess is certainly chargeable with the fault you mention, though I thought it not very glaring in the piece I sent you. I have endeavoured indeed, in all the translations I have made, to cure her of that evil, either by the suppression of passages exceptionable upon that account, or by a more sober and respectful manner of expression. Still however she will be found to have conversed familiarly with God, but I hope not fulsomely, nor so as to give reasonable disgust to a religious reader. That God should deal familiarly with man, or, which is the same thing, that he should permit man to deal familiarly with him, seems not very difficult to conceive, or presumptuous to suppose, when some things are taken into consideration. Woe to the sinner that shall dare to take a liberty with Him that is not warranted by his word, or to which He himself has not encouraged him! Till the incarnation of the Godhead is verily believed, He is unapproachable by man upon any terms; and in that case to accost him as if we had a right of relationship, when in reality we have none, would be to affront Him to his face. But an Incarnate God is as much human as divine. When He assumed man's nature, he revealed himself as the friend of man, as the brother of every soul that loves him. He conversed freely with man while he was upon earth, and as freely with him after his resurrection. I doubt not therefore that it is possible to enjoy an access to Him even now unincumbered with ceremonious awe, easy, delightful, and

without constraint. This however can only be the lot of those who make it the business of their lives to please him, and to cultivate communion with him. And then I presume there can be no danger of offence, because such a habit of the soul is of his own creation, and near as we come, we come no nearer to him than He is pleased to draw us. If we address him as children, it is because he tells us he is our father. If we unbosom ourselves to him as to a friend, it is because he calls us friends; and if we speak to him in the language of love, it is because he first used it, thereby teaching us that it is the language he delights to hear from his people. But I confess that through the weakness, the folly, and corruption of human nature, this privilege, like all other Christian privileges, is liable to abuse. There is a mixture of evil in every thing we do; indulgence encourages us to encroach, and while we exercise the rights of children, we become childish. Here I think is the point in which my authoress failed; and here it is that I have particularly guarded my translation, not afraid of representing her as dealing with God familiarly, but foolishly, irreverently, and without due attention to his majesty, of which she is sometimes guilty. A wonderful fault for such a woman to fall into, who spent her life in the contemplation of his glory, who seems to have been always impressed with a sense of it, and sometimes quite absorbed in the views she had of it.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 8, 1783.

MRS. UNWIN would have answered your kind note from Bedford, had not a pain in her side prevented her. It still continues, but is less violent than it was. I, who am her secretary upon such occasions, should certainly have answered it for her, but was hindered by illness, having been myself seized with a fever immediately after your departure. The account of your recovery gave us great pleasure, and I am persuaded that you will feel yourself repaid by the information that I give you of mine. The reveries your head was filled with, while your disorder was most prevalent, though they were but reveries, and the offspring of a heated imagination, afforded you yet a comfortable evidence of the predominant bias of your heart and mind to the best subjects. I had none such; it would have been wonderful if I had: indeed I was in no degree delirious, nor has any thing less than a fever really dangerous ever made me so. In this respect, if in no other, I may be said to have a strong head; and perhaps for the same reason that wine would never make me drunk, an ordinary degree of fever has no effect upon my understanding.

The epidemic begins to be more mortal as the autumn comes on. Two men of drunken memory, Bob Freeman and Bob Kitchener, have died of it since you went. In Bedfordshire it is reported, how truly however I cannot say, to be nearly as fatal as the plague. It is well for those about me, that I am neither very subject to fevers, nor apt to lose my

senses when I have one. My ravings would be those of a man more conversant with things beneath than with things above, and if they bore any resemblance to my habitual musings, would serve only to shock bystanders. I heard lately of a clerk in a public office, whose chief employment it was for many years to administer oaths, who being light-headed in a fever, of which he died, spent the last week of his life in crying day and night—"So help you God—kiss the book—give me a shilling." What a wretch in comparison with you, and how happy in comparison with me!

I have indeed been lately more dejected and more distressed than usual; more harassed by dreams in the night, and more deeply poisoned by them in the following day. I know not what is portended by an alteration for the worse after eleven years of misery, but firmly believe that it is not designed as the introduction of a change for the better. You know not what I suffered while you were here, nor was there any need you should. Your friendship for me would have made you in some degree a partaker of my woes, and your share in them would have been increased by your inability to help me. Perhaps indeed they took a keener edge from the consideration of your presence; the friend of my heart, the person with whom I had formerly taken sweet counsel, no longer useful to me as a minister, no longer pleasant to me as a Christian, was a spectacle that must necessarily add the bitterness of mortification to the sadness of despair. I now see a long winter before me, and am to get through it as I can. I know the ground

before I tread upon it; it is hollow, it is agitated, it suffers shocks in every direction; it is like the soil of Calabria, all whirlpool and undulation: but I must reel through it,—at least if I be not swallowed up by the way.

Mr. Scott has been ill almost ever since you left us. This light atmosphere, and these unremitting storms, are very unfriendly to an asthmatic habit. He suffers accordingly; and last Saturday, as on many foregoing Saturdays, was obliged to clap on a blister by way of preparation for his Sunday labours. He cannot draw breath upon any other terms. If holy orders were always conferred upon such conditions, I question but even bishopricks themselves would want an occupant. But he is easy and cheerful, and likes his wages well.

I beg you will mention me kindly to Mr. Bacon, and make him sensible that if I did not write the paragraph he wished for, it was not owing to any want of respect for the desire he expressed, but to mere inability. If in a state of mind that almost disqualifies me for society, I could possibly wish to form a new connexion, I should wish to know him; but I never shall, and things being as they are, I do not regret it. You are my old friend, therefore I do not spare you; having known you in better days, I make you pay for any pleasure I might then afford you, by a communication of my present pains. But I have no claims of this sort upon Mr. Bacon.

Be pleased to remember us both, with much affection, to Mrs. Newton, and to her and your Eliza; to Miss Catlett likewise, if she is with you. Poor Eliza droops and languishes, but in the land to which she is

going, she will hold up her head and droop no more. A sickness that leads the way to everlasting life is better than the health of an antediluvian. Accept our united love.

My dear friend, sincerely yours,

W. C.

Lady Austen desires me to add her compliments.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 23, 1783.

We are glad that having been attacked by a fever, which has often proved fatal, and almost always leaves the sufferer debilitated to the last degree, you find yourself so soon restored to health, and your strength recovered. *Your* health and strength are useful to others, and in that view important in *his* account who dispenses both, and by your means a more precious gift than either. For my own part, though I have not been laid up, I have never been perfectly well since you left us. A smart fever, which lasted indeed but a few hours, succeeded by lassitude and want of spirits, that seemed still to indicate a feverish habit, has made for some time, and still makes me very unfit for my favourite occupations, writing and reading;— so that even a letter, and even a letter to you, is not without its burthen. An emetic which I took yesterday has, I believe, done me more good than any thing, but I shall be able to ascertain that point better when I have recovered from the fatigue of it. John Line has had the epidemic, and has it still, but grows bet-

ter. When he was first seized with it, he gave notice that he should die, but in this only instance of prophetic exertion he seems to have been mistaken: he has, however been very near it. Bett Fisher was buried last night: she died of the distemper. Molly Clifton is dying, but of a decline. I should have told you, that poor John has been very ready to depart, and much comforted through his whole illness. He, you know, though a silent, has been a very steady professor, and therefore, though but a botcher, which is somewhat less than a tailor, seems to have been more than a match for the last enemy. Oh, what things pass in cottages and hovels, which the great never dream of! French philosophers amuse themselves, and, according to their own phrase, cover themselves with glory, by inventing air-balls, which, by their own buoyancy, ascend above the clouds, and are lost in regions which no human contrivance could ever penetrate before. An English tailor, an inhabitant of the dunghills of Silver End, prays, and his prayer ascends into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. He indeed covers himself with glory, fights battles, and gains victories, but makes no noise. Europe is not astonished at his feats, foreign Academies do not seek him for a member; he will never discover the art of flying, or send a globe of taffeta up to heaven. But he will go thither himself. I am afraid there is hardly a philosopher among them that would be wise enough to change conditions with him if he could, yet certainly there is not one that would not be infinitely a gainer by doing so.

Since you went, we dined with Mr. Bull at Newport. I had sent him notice of our visit a week before,

which, like a contemplative, studious man, as he is, he put in his pocket and forgot. When we arrived, the parlour windows were shut, and the house had the appearance of being uninhabited. After waiting some time, however, the maid opened the door, and the master presented himself. Mrs. Bull and her son were gone to Bedford, but having found what we chiefly wanted, we dined and spent the afternoon together comfortably enough. It is hardly worth while to observe so repeatedly that his garden seems a spot contrived only for the growth of melancholy; but being always affected by it in the same way I cannot help it. He showed me a nook, in which he had placed a bench, and where he said he found it very refreshing to smoke his pipe and meditate. Here he sits, with his back against one brick-wall, and his nose against another, which must, you know, be very refreshing, and greatly assist meditation. He rejoices the more in this niche, because it is an acquisition made at some expense, and with no small labour; several loads of earth were removed in order to make it,—which loads of earth, had I the management of them, I should carry thither again, and fill up a place more fit in appearance to be a repository for the dead than the living. I would on no account put any man out of conceit with his innocent enjoyments, and therefore never tell him my thoughts upon this subject; but he is not seldom low-spirited, and I cannot but suspect that his situation helps to make him so.

Mrs. Unwin begs that Mrs. Newton will be so kind as to buy her a box-comb, with fine teeth on both sides. She hopes the ham arrived safe.

I shall be obliged to you for Hawkesworth's Voyages, when it can be sent conveniently. The long evenings are beginning, and nothing shortens them so effectually as reading aloud.

Lady Austen returns her compliments. The Jones's are gone to Brighton. Mr. Page has warning to quit Ranstone. Mr. Scott is better than he has been, but so weak that he is obliged to ride to Weston. Mrs. Unwin is well, and bids me assure you of our joint love, which I would be understood to do in the warmest terms, and with the greatest sincerity. Our love likewise attends Eliza.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, Sept. 29, 1783.

We are sorry that you and your household partake so largely of the ill effects of this unhealthy season. You are happy however in having hitherto escaped the epidemic fever, which has prevailed much in this part of the kingdom, and carried many off. Your mother and I are well. After more than a fortnight's indisposition, which slight appellation is quite adequate to the description of all I suffered, I am at length restored by a grain or two of emetic tartar. It is a tax I generally pay in autumn. By this time, I hope, a purer ether than we have seen for months, and these brighter suns than the summer had to boast, have cheered your spirits, and made your existence more comfortable. We are rational; but we are animal

too, and therefore subject to the influences of the weather. The cattle in the fields show evident symptoms of lassitude and disgust in an unpleasant season; and we, their lords and masters, are constrained to sympathize with them: the only difference between us is, that they know not the cause of their dejection, and we do,—but, for our humiliation, are equally at a loss to cure it. Upon this account I have sometimes wished myself a philosopher. How happy, in comparison with myself, does the sagacious investigator of nature seem, whose fancy is ever employed in the invention of *hypotheses*, and his reason in the support of them! While he is accounting for the origin of the winds, he has no leisure to attend to their influence upon himself; and while he considers what the sun is made of, forgets that he has not shone for a month. One project indeed supplants another. The *vortices* of Descartes gave way to the gravitation of Newton, and this again is threatened by the electrical fluid of a modern. One generation blows bubbles, and the next breaks them. But in the mean time your philosopher is a happy man. He escapes a thousand inquietudes to which the indolent are subject, and finds his occupation, whether it be the pursuit of a butterfly, or a demonstration, the wholesomest exercise in the world. As he proceeds, he applauds himself. His discoveries, though eventually perhaps they prove but dreams, are to him realities. The world gaze at him, as he does at new phenomena in the heavens, and perhaps understand him as little. But this does not prevent their praises, nor at all disturb him in the enjoyment of that self-complacence, to which his

imaginary success entitles him. He wears his honours while he lives, and if another strips them off when he has been dead a century, it is no great matter; he can then make shift without them.

I have said a great deal upon this subject, and know not what it all amounts to. I did not intend a syllable of it when I began. But *currente calamo*, I stumbled upon it. My end is to amuse myself and you. The former of these two points is secured. I shall be happy if I do not miss the latter.

By the way, what is your opinion of these air-balloons? I am quite charmed with the discovery. Is it not possible (do you suppose) to convey such a quantity of inflammable air into the stomach and abdomen, that the philosopher, no longer gravitating to a centre, shall ascend by his own comparative levity, and never stop till he has reached the medium exactly *in equilibrio* with himself? May he not by the help of a pasteboard rudder, attached to his posteriors, steer himself in that purer element with ease; and again by a slow and gradual discharge of his aerial contents, recover his former tendency to the earth, and descend without the smallest danger or inconvenience? These things are worth inquiry; and (I dare say) they will be inquired after as they deserve. The *pennæ non homini datæ* are likely to be less regretted than they were; and perhaps a flight of academicians and a covey of fine ladies may be no uncommon spectacle in the next generation. A letter which appeared in the public prints last week convinces me, that the learned are not without hopes of some such improvement upon this discovery. The

author is a sensible and ingenious man, and under a reasonable apprehension that the ignorant may feel themselves inclined to laugh upon a subject that affects himself with the utmost seriousness, with much good manners and management bespeaks their patience, suggesting many good consequences that may result from a course of experiments upon this machine, and amongst others, that it may be of use in ascertaining the shape of continents and islands, and the face of wide-extended and far distant countries; an end not to be hoped for, unless by these means of extraordinary elevation the human prospect may be immensely enlarged, and the philosopher, exalted to the skies, attain a view of the whole hemisphere at once. But whether he is to ascend by the mere inflation of his person, as hinted above, or whether in a sort of bandbox, supported upon balloons, is not yet apparent, nor (I suppose) even in his own idea perfectly decided.

Yours, my dear William,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 6, 1783.

IT is indeed a melancholy consideration, that the Gospel, whose direct tendency is to promote the happiness of mankind in the present life, as well as in the life to come, and which so effectually answers the design of its Author, whenever it is well understood and sincerely believed, should through the ignorance, the bigotry, the superstition of its professors, and the ambition of popes, and princes the tools of popes,

have produced incidentally so much mischief; only furnishing the world with a plausible excuse to worry each other, while they sanctified the worst cause with the specious pretext of zeal for the furtherance of the best.

Angels descend from Heaven to publish peace between man and his Maker; the Prince of Peace himself comes to confirm and establish it, and war, hatred, and desolation are the consequence. Thousands quarrel about the interpretation of a book which none of them understand. He that is slain dies firmly persuaded that the crown of martyrdom expects him; and he that slew him is equally convinced that he has done God service. In reality they are both mistaken, and equally unentitled to the honour they arrogate to themselves. If a multitude of blind men should set out for a certain city, and dispute about the right road till a battle ensued between them, the probable effect would be that none of them would ever reach it; and such a fray, preposterous and shocking in the extreme, would exhibit a picture in some degree resembling the original of which we have been speaking. And why is not the world thus occupied at present?—even because they have exchanged a zeal, that was no better than madness, for an indifference equally pitiable and absurd. The holy sepulchre has lost its importance in the eyes of nations called Christians, not because the light of true wisdom has delivered them from a superstitious attachment to the spot, but because He that was buried in it is no longer regarded by them as the Saviour of the world. The exercise of reason, enlightened by philosophy, has cured them indeed of

the misery of an abused understanding, but together with the delusion they have lost the substance, and for the sake of the lies that were grafted upon it have quarrelled with the truth itself. Here then we see the *ne plus ultrà* of human wisdom, at least in affairs of religion. It enlightens the mind with respect to non-essentials, but with respect to that in which the essence of Christianity consists, leaves it perfectly in the dark. It can discover many errors that in different ages have disgraced the faith; but it is only to make way for the admission of one more fatal than them all, which represents that faith itself as a delusion. Why those evils have been permitted shall be known hereafter. One thing in the mean time is certain, that the folly and frenzy of the professed disciples of the Gospel have been more dangerous to its interests, than all the avowed hostilities of its adversaries; and perhaps for this cause these mischiefs might be suffered to prevail for a season, that its divine original and nature might be the more illustrated, when it should appear that it was able to stand its ground for ages against that most formidable of all attacks, the indiscretion of its friends. The outrages that have followed this perversion of the truth have proved indeed a stumbling-block to individuals; the wise of this world, with all their wisdom, have not been able to distinguish between the blessing and the abuse of it. Voltaire was offended, and Gibbon has turned his back; but the flock of Christ is still nourished, and still increases, notwithstanding the unbelief of a philosopher is able to convert bread into a stone, and a fish into a serpent.

I am much obliged to you for the voyages, which I received, and began to read last night. My imagination is so captivated upon these occasions, that I seem to partake with the navigators in all the dangers they encountered. I lose my anchor; my mainsail is rent into shreds; I kill a shark, and by signs converse with a Patagonian, and all this without moving from the fireside. The principal fruits of these circuits, that have been made around the globe, seem likely to be the amusement of those that staid at home. Discoveries have been made, but such discoveries as will hardly satisfy the expense of such undertakings. We brought away an Indian, and having debauched him, we sent him home again to communicate the infection to his country; fine sport to be sure, but such as will not defray the cost. Nations that live upon bread-fruit, and have no mines to make them worthy of our acquaintance, will be but little visited for the future. So much the better for them! their poverty is indeed their mercy.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, October, 1783.

I AM much obliged to you for your American anecdotes, and feel the obligation perhaps more sensibly, the labour of transcribing being in particular that to which I myself have the greatest aversion. The Loyalists are much to be pitied; driven from all the

comforts that depend upon and are intimately connected with a residence in their native land, and sent to cultivate a distant one, without the means of doing it; abandoned too, through a deplorable necessity, by the government to which they have sacrificed all,—they exhibit a spectacle of distress, which one cannot view even at this distance without participating in what they feel. Why could not some of our useless wastes and forests have been allotted to their support? To have built them houses indeed, and to have furnished them with implements of husbandry, would have put us to no small expense; but I suppose the increase of population, and the improvement of the soil, would soon have been felt as a national advantage, and have indemnified the state, if not enriched it. But I am afraid that nothing so virtuous, or so wise, is to be looked for in the public measures of the present day. We are bountiful to foreigners, and neglect those of our own household. I remember that, compassionating the miseries of the Portugueze, at the time of the Lisbon earthquake, we sent them a ship-load of tools to clear away the rubbish with, and to assist them in rebuilding the city. I remember, too, it was reported at the time, that the court of Portugal accepted our wheelbarrows and spades with a very ill grace, and treated our bounty with contempt. An act like this in behalf of our brethren, carried only a little further, might possibly have redeemed them from ruin, have resulted in emolument to ourselves, have been received with joy, and repaid with gratitude. Such are my speculations upon the subject, who not being a politician

by profession, and very seldom giving my attention for a moment to any such matter, may not be aware of difficulties and objections, which they of the cabinet can discern with half an eye. Perhaps to have taken under our protection a race of men proscribed by the Congress might be thought dangerous to the interests we hope to have hereafter in their high and mighty regards and affections. It is ever the way of those who rule the earth, to leave out of their reckoning Him who rules the universe. They forget that the poor have a friend more powerful to avenge, than they can be to oppress, and that treachery and perfidy must therefore prove bad policy in the end. The Americans themselves appear to me to be in a situation little less pitiable than that of the deserted Loyalists. A revolt can hardly be said to have been successful that has exchanged only an apprehended tyranny for a real one, and has shaken off the restraints of a well ordered government, merely to give room and opportunity for the jarring opinions and interests of its abettors to throw all into a state of anarchy. This is evidently the case at present, and without a special interposition of Providence is likely to be for years to come. They will at last, perhaps, after much ill temper and bloodshed, settle into some sort of establishment; but hardly, I think, into a more desireable one (and it seems they themselves are pretty much of the same opinion) than they enjoyed before. Their fears of arbitrary imposition were certainly well founded. A struggle therefore might be necessary, in order to prevent it, and this end might surely have

been answered without a renunciation of dependence. But the passions of a whole people, once put in motion, are not soon quieted. Contest begets aversion, a little success inspires more ambitious hopes, and thus a slight quarrel terminates at last in a breach never to be healed, and perhaps in the ruin of both parties. It does not seem likely, that a country so distinguished by the Creator with every thing that can make it desirable, should be given up to desolation for ever; and they possibly may have reason on their side, who suppose that in time it will have the preeminence over all others; but the day of such prosperity seems far distant: Omnipotence indeed can hasten it, and it may dawn when it is least expected. But we govern ourselves in all our reasonings by present appearances. Persons at least no better informed than myself are constrained to do so.

You surprised me most agreeably with a polite and sensible letter from Mr. Bacon: that good man has a place in my heart, though I never saw him, and never may. I shall never see the print he so obligingly presents me with, without sentiments of gratitude and friendship, and shall endeavour to answer his letter in such terms as his kindness justly claims, as soon as the print arrives.

We have opened two of the cocoa nuts: one naught and the other excellent; the third promises to be a good one. I intended to have taken another subject when I began, and I wish I had. No man living is less qualified to settle nations than I am; but when I write to you, I talk,—that is, I write as fast as my pen

can run, and on this occasion it ran away with me. I acknowledge myself in your debt for your last favour, but cannot pay you now, unless you will accept as payment, what I know you value more than all I can say beside, the most unfeigned assurances of my affection for you and yours.

Yours, &c.

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Oct. 20, 1783.

I SHOULD not have been thus long silent, had I known with certainty where a letter of mine might find you. Your summer excursions however are now at an end, and addressing a line to you in the centre of the busy scene in which you spend your winter, I am pretty sure of my mark.

I see the winter approaching without much concern, though a passionate lover of fine weather and the pleasant scenes of summer; but the long evenings have their comforts too, and there is hardly to be found upon the earth, I suppose, so snug a creature as an Englishman by his fireside in the winter. I mean however an Englishman that lives in the country, for in London it is not very easy to avoid intrusion. I have two ladies to read to, sometimes more, but never less. At present we are circumnavigating the globe, and I find the old story with which I amused myself some years since, through the great felicity of a memory not very retentive, almost new. I am

however sadly at a loss for Cook's voyage, can you send it? I shall be glad of Foster's too. These together will make the winter pass merrily, and you will much oblige me.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, Nov. 10, 1783.

I HAVE lost and wasted almost all my writing time, in making an alteration in the verses I either enclose or subjoin, for I know not which will be the case at present[1]. If prose comes readily, I shall transcribe them on another sheet, otherwise, on this. You will understand, before you have read many of them, that they are not for the press. I lay you under no other injunctions. The unkind behaviour of our acquaintance, though it is possible that in some instances it may not much affect our happiness, nor engage many of our thoughts, will sometimes obtrude itself upon us with a degree of importunity not easily resisted; and then perhaps, though almost insensible of it before, we feel more than the occasion will justify. In such a moment it was that I conceived this poem, and gave loose to a degree of resentment, which perhaps I ought not to have indulged, but which in a cooler hour I cannot altogether condemn. My former intimacy with the two characters was such, that I could not but feel myself provoked by the neglect with which

[1] The Valediction.

they both treated me on a late occasion. So much by way of preface.

You ought not to have supposed that if you had visited us last summer, the pleasure of the interview would have been all your own. By such an imagination you wrong both yourself and us. Do you suppose we do not love you? You cannot suspect your mother of coldness; and as to me, assure yourself I have no friend in the world with whom I communicate without the least reserve, yourself excepted. Take heart then, and when you find a favourable opportunity to come, assure yourself of such a welcome from us both as you have a right to look for. But I have observed in your two last letters somewhat of a dejection and melancholy, that I am afraid you do not sufficiently strive against. I suspect you of being too sedentary. "You cannot walk." Why you cannot is best known to yourself. I am sure your legs are long enough, and your person does not overload them. But I beseech you ride, and ride often. I think I have heard you say, you cannot even do that without an object. Is not health an object? Is not a new prospect, which in most countries is gained at the end of every mile, an object? Assure yourself that easy chairs are no friends to cheerfulness, and that a long winter spent by the fireside is a prelude to an unhealthy spring. Every thing I see in the fields is to me an object, and I can look at the same rivulet, or at a handsome tree, every day of my life, with new pleasure. This indeed is partly the effect of a natural taste for rural beauty, and partly the effect of habit;

for I never in all my life have let slip the opportunity of breathing fresh air, and of conversing with nature, when I could fairly catch it. I earnestly recommend a cultivation of the same taste to you, suspecting that you have neglected it, and suffer for doing so.

Last Saturday se'nnight, the moment I had composed myself in my bed, your mother too having just got into hers, we were alarmed by a cry of fire on the staircase. I immediately rose, and saw sheets of flame above the roof of Mr. Palmer's house, our opposite neighbour. The mischief however was not so near to him as it seemed to be, having begun in a butcher's yard, at a little distance. We made all haste down stairs, and soon threw open the street door, for the reception of as much lumber, of all sorts, as our house would hold, brought into it by several who thought it necessary to move their furniture. In two hours time we had so much that we could hold no more, even the uninhabited part of our building being filled. Not that we ourselves were entirely secure—an adjoining thatch, on which fell showers of sparks, being rather a dangerous neighbour. Providentially, however, the night was perfectly calm, and we escaped. By four in the morning it was extinguished, having consumed many out-buildings, but no dwelling-house. Your mother suffered a little in her health, from the fatigue and bustle of the night, but soon recovered. As for me, it hurt me not. The slightest wind would have carried the fire to the very extremity of the town, there being multitudes of thatched buildings and faggot-piles so near to each

other, that they must have proved infallible conductors.

The balloons prosper: and I congratulate you upon it. Thanks to Montgolfier, we shall fly at last.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, Nov. 24, 1783.

An evening unexpectedly retired, and which your mother and I spend without company (an occurrence far from frequent), affords me a favourable opportunity to write by to-morrow's post, which else I could not have found. You are very good to consider my literary necessities with so much attention, and I feel proportionably grateful. Blair's Lectures (though I suppose they must make a part of my private studies, not being *ad captum fœminarum*) will be perfectly welcome.

You say you felt my verses; I assure you that in this you followed my example, for I felt them first. A man's lordship is nothing to me, any further than in connexion with qualities that entitle him to my respect. If he thinks himself privileged by it to treat me with neglect, I am his humble servant, and shall never be at a loss to render him an equivalent. I am however most angry with the manager. He has published a book since he received mine [illegible] not vouchsafed to send it me; a requital
ners, not to say the remembran

ought to have suggested. I will not, however, belie my knowledge of mankind so much, as to seem surprised at treatment which I had abundant reason to expect. To these men, with whom I was once intimate, and for many years, I am no longer necessary, no longer convenient, or in any respect an object. They think of me as of the man in the moon, and whether I have a lantern, a dog and a faggot, or whether I have neither of those desirable accommodations, is to them a matter of perfect indifference: upon that point we are agreed, our indifference is mutual, and were I to publish again, which is not impossible, I should give them a proof of it.

L'Estrange's Josephus has lately furnished us with evening lectures. But the historian is so tediously circumstantial, and the translator so insupportably coarse and vulgar, that we are all three weary of him. How would Tacitus have shone upon such a subject, great master as he was of the art of description, concise without obscurity, and affecting without being poetical. But so it was ordered, and for wise reasons no doubt, that the greatest calamities any people ever suffered, and an accomplishment of one of the most signal prophecies in the Scripture, should be recorded by one of the worst writers. The man was a temporizer too, and courted the favour of his Roman masters at the expense of his own creed; or else an infidel, and absolutely disbelieved it. You will think me very difficult to please; I quarrel with Josephus for the want of elegance, and with some of our modern historians for having too much. With him, for running

right forward like a gazette, without stopping to make a single observation by the way; and with them, for pretending to delineate characters that existed two thousand years ago, and to discover the motives by which they were influenced, with the same precision as if they had been their contemporaries. Simplicity is become a very rare quality in a writer. In the decline of great kingdoms, and where refinement in all the arts is carried to an excess, I suppose it is always rare. The latter Roman writers are remarkable for false ornament, they were yet no doubt admired by the readers of their own day; and with respect to authors of the present era, the most popular among them appear to me equally censurable on the same account. Swift and Addison were simple; Pope knew how to be so, but was frequently tinged with affectation; since their day I hardly know a celebrated writer who deserves the character. But your mother wants room for a postscript, so my lecture must conclude abruptly. Yours,

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MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is hard upon us striplings who have uncles still living (N. B. I myself have an uncle still alive,) that those venerable gentlemen should stand in our way, even when the ladies are in question; that I, for instance, should find in one page of your letter a hope that Miss Shuttleworth would be of your party, and

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be told in the next that she is engaged to your uncle. Well, we may perhaps never be uncles; but we may reasonably hope that the time is coming, when others, as young as we are now, shall envy us the privileges of old age, and see us engross that share in the attention of the ladies to which their youth must aspire in vain. Make our compliments if you please to your sister Elizabeth, and tell her that we are both mortified at having missed the pleasure of seeing her.

Balloons are so much the mode, that even in this country we have attempted a balloon. You may possibly remember that at a place called Weston, little more than a mile from Olney, there lives a family whose name is Throckmorton. The present possessor of the estate is a young man whom I remember a boy. He has a wife, who is young, genteel, and handsome. They are Papists, but much more amiable than many Protestants. We never had any intercourse with the family, though ever since we lived here we have enjoyed the range of their pleasure grounds, having been favoured with a key, which admits us into all. When this man succeeded to the estate, on the death of his elder brother, and came to settle at Weston, I sent him a complimentary card, requesting the continuance of that privilege, having till then enjoyed it by the favour of his mother, who on that occasion went to finish her days at Bath. You may conclude that he granted it, and for about two years nothing more passed between us. A fortnight ago, I received an invitation in the civilest terms, in which he told me that the next day he should attempt to fill a balloon,

and if it would be any pleasure to me to be present, should be happy to see me. Your mother and I went. The whole country were there, but the balloon could not be filled. The endeavour was, I believe, very philosophically made, but such a process depends for its success upon such niceties as make it very precarious. Our reception was however flattering to a great degree, insomuch that more notice seemed to be taken of us, than we could possibly have expected; indeed rather more than of any of his other guests. They even seemed anxious to recommend themselves to our regards. We drank chocolate, and were asked to dine, but were engaged. A day or two afterwards, Mrs. Unwin and I walked that way, and were overtaken in a shower. I found a tree that I thought would shelter us both,—a large elm, in a grove that fronts the mansion. Mrs. T. observed us, and running towards us in the rain insisted on our walking in. He was gone out. We sat chatting with her till the weather cleared up, and then at her instance took a walk with her in the garden. The garden is almost their only walk, and is certainly their only retreat in which they are not liable to interruption. She offered us a key of it in a manner that made it impossible not to accept it, and said she would send us one. A few days afterwards, in the cool of the evening, we walked that way again. We saw them going toward the house, and exchanged bows and curtsies at a little distance, but did not join them. In a few minutes, when we had passed the house, and had almost reached the gate that opens out of the park

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into the adjoining field, I heard the iron gate belonging to the court-yard ring, and saw Mr. T. advancing hastily toward us; we made equal haste to meet him, he presented to us the key, which I told him I esteemed a singular favour, and after a few such speeches as are made on such occasions, we parted This happened about a week ago. I concluded nothing less, than that all this civility and attention was designed, on their part, as a prelude to a nearer acquaintance; but here at present the matter rests. I should like exceedingly to be on an easy footing there, to give a morning call, and now and then to receive one, but nothing more. For though he is one of the most agreeable men I ever saw, I could not wish to visit him in any other way, neither our house, furniture, servants, or income, being such as qualify us to make entertainments; neither would I on any account be introduced to the neighbouring gentry, which must be the consequence of our dining there, there not being a man in the country, except himself, with whom I could endure to associate. They are squires, merely such, purse-proud and sportsmen. But Mr. T. is altogether a man of fashion, and respectable on every account.

I have told you a long story. Farewell. We number the days as they pass, and are glad that we shall see you and your sister soon.

Yours, &c.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, Jan. 3, 1784.

YOUR silence began to be distressing both to your mother and me, and had I not received a letter from you last night, I should have written by this post to enquire after your health. How can it be, that you, who are not stationary like me, but often change your situation and mix with a variety of company, should suppose me furnished with such abundant materials, and yourself destitute? I assure you faithfully, that I do not find the soil of Olney prolific in the growth of such articles as make letter-writing a desirable employment. No place contributes less to the catalogue of incidents, or is more scantily supplied with anecdotes worth notice.

We have

> One parson, one poet, one belman, one crier,
> And the poor poet is our only 'squire.

Guess then if I have not more reason to expect two letters from you, than you one from me. The principal occurrence, and that which affects me most at present, came to pass this moment. The stair-foot door being swelled by the thaw, would do any thing better than it would open. An attempt to force it upon that office has been attended with such a horrible dissolution of its parts, that we were immediately obliged to introduce a chirurgeon, commonly called a carpenter, whose applications we have some hope will cure it of a locked jaw, and heal its numerous

fractures. His medicines are powerful chalybeates, and a certain glutinous salve, which he tells me is made of the tails and ears of animals. The consequences however are rather unfavourable to my present employment, which does not well brook noise, bustle, and interruption.

This being the case, I shall not perhaps be either so perspicuous, or so diffuse, on the subject of which you desire my sentiments, as I should be; but I will do my best. Know then that I have learnt long since, of Abbé Raynal, to hate all monopolies, as injurious, howsoever managed, to the interests of commerce at large: consequently the charter in question would not at any rate be a favourite of mine. This however is of itself I confess no sufficient reason to justify the resumption of it. But such reasons I think are not wanting. A grant of that kind, it is well known, is always forfeited by the nonperformance of the conditions. And why not equally forfeited, if those conditions are exceeded, if the design of it be perverted, and its operation extended to objects which were never in the contemplation of the donor? This appears to me to be no misrepresentation of their case, whose charter is supposed to be in danger. It constitutes them a trading company, and gives them an exclusive right to traffic in the East Indies. But it does no more. It invests them with no sovereignty; it does not convey to them the royal prerogative of making war and peace, which the king cannot alienate if he would. But this prerogative they have exercised, and, forgetting the terms of their institution, have possessed

themselves of an immense territory, which they have ruled with a rod of iron, to which it is impossible they should ever have a right, unless such a one as it is a disgrace to plead,—the right of conquest. The potentates of this country they dash in pieces like a potter's vessel, as often as they please, making the happiness of thirty millions of mankind a consideration subordinate to that of their own emolument, oppressing them as often as it may serve a lucrative purpose, and in no instance, that I have ever heard, consulting their interest or advantage. That government therefore is bound to interfere, and to unking these tyrants, is to me self-evident. And if having subjugated so much of this miserable world, it is therefore necessary that we must keep possession of it, it appears to me a duty so binding upon the legislature to rescue it from the hands of those usurpers, that I should think a curse, and a bitter one, must follow the neglect of it. But suppose this were done, can they be legally deprived of their charter? In truth I think so. If the abuse and perversion of a charter can amount to a defeasance of it, never were they so grossly palpable as in this instance; never was charter so justly forfeited. Neither am I at all afraid that such a measure should be drawn into a precedent, unless it could be alleged as a sufficient reason for not hanging a rogue, that perhaps magistracy might grow wanton in the exercise of such a power, and now and then hang up an honest man for its amusement. When the governors of the bank shall have deserved the same severity, I hope they will meet with it. In the mean time I do not think them a whit

more in jeopardy because a corporation of plunderers have been brought to justice.

We are well, and love you all. I never wrote in such a hurry, nor in such disturbance. Pardon the effects, and believe me yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 13, 1784.

I too have taken leave of the old year, and parted with it just when you did, but with very different sentiments and feelings upon the occasion. I looked back upon all the passages and occurrences of it, as a traveller looks back upon a wilderness, through which he has passed with weariness, and sorrow of heart, reaping no other fruit of his labour, than the poor consolation that, dreary as the desert was, he has left it all behind him. The traveller would find even this comfort considerably lessened, if, as soon as he had passed one wilderness, another of equal length, and equally desolate, should expect him. In this particular, his experience and mine would exactly tally. I should rejoice indeed that the old year is over and gone, if I had not every reason to prophesy a new one similar to it.

The new year is already old in my account. I am not, indeed, sufficiently second-sighted to be able to boast by anticipation an acquaintance with the events of it yet unborn, but rest convinced that, be they what they may, not one of them comes a messenger of good

to me. If even death itself should be of the number, he is no friend of mine. It is an alleviation of the woes even of an unenlightened man, that he can wish for death, and indulge a hope, at least, that in death he shall find deliverance. But, loaded as my life is with despair, I have no such comfort as would result from a supposed probability of better things to come, were it once ended. For, more unhappy than the traveller with whom I set out, pass through what difficulties I may, through whatever dangers and afflictions, I am not a whit the nearer home, unless a dungeon may be called so. This is no very agreeable theme; but in so great a dearth of subjects to write upon, and especially impressed as I am at this moment with a sense of my own condition, I could choose no other. The weather is an exact emblem of my mind in its present state. A thick fog envelopes every thing, and at the same time it freezes intensely. You will tell me that this cold gloom will be succeeded by a cheerful spring, and endeavour to encourage me to hope for a spiritual change resembling it;—but it will be lost labour. Nature revives again; but a soul once slain lives no more. The hedge that has been apparently dead, is not so; it will burst into leaf and blossom at the appointed time; but no such time is appointed for the stake that stands in it. It is as dead as it seems, and will prove itself no dissembler. The latter end of next month will complete a period of eleven years in which I have spoken no other language. It is a long time for a man, whose eyes were once opened, to spend in darkness; long enough to make despair an inveterate habit; and such it is in

me. My friends, I know, expect that I shall see yet again. They think it necessary to the existence of divine truth, that he who once had possession of it should never finally lose it. I admit the solidity of this reasoning in every case but my own. And why not in my own? For causes which to them it appears madness to allege, but which rest upon my mind with a weight of immoveable conviction. If I am recoverable, why am I thus? why crippled and made useless in the church, just at that time of life, when, my judgement and experience being matured, I might be most useful? why cashiered and turned out of service, till, according to the course of nature, there is not life enough left in me to make amends for the years I have lost,—till there is no reasonable hope left that the fruit can ever pay the expense of the fallow? I forestall the answer:—God's ways are mysterious, and he giveth no account of his matters:—an answer that would serve my purpose as well as theirs that use it. There is a mystery in my destruction, and in time it shall be explained.

I am glad you have found so much hidden treasure; and Mrs. Unwin desires me to tell you that you did her no more than justice, in believing that she would rejoice in it. It is not easy to surmise the reason, why the reverend doctor, your predecessor, concealed it. Being a subject of a free government, and I suppose full of the divinity most in fashion, he could not fear lest his great riches should expose him to persecution. Nor can I suppose that he held it any disgrace for a dignitary of the church to be wealthy, at a time when churchmen in general spare no pains to become so.

But the wisdom of some men has a droll sort of knavishness in it, much like that of a magpie, who hides what he finds with a deal of contrivance, merely for the pleasure of doing it.

Mrs. Unwin is tolerably well. She wishes me to add that she shall be obliged to Mrs. Newton, if, when an opportunity offers, she will give the worsted-merchant a jog. We congratulate you that Eliza does not grow worse, which I know you expected would be the case in the course of the winter. Present our love to her. Remember us to Sally Johnson, and assure yourself that we remain as warmly as ever.

Yours,

W. C.

M. U.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, Jan. 1784.

WHEN I first resolved to write an answer to your last, this evening, I had no thought of any thing more sublime than prose. But before I began, it occurred to me that perhaps you would not be displeased with an attempt to give a poetical translation of the lines you sent me. They are so beautiful, that I felt the temptation irresistible. At least, as the French say, it was *plus forte que moi;* and I accordingly complied. By this means I have lost an hour; and whether I shall be able to fill my sheets before supper, is as yet doubtful. But I will do my best.

For your remarks, I think them perfectly just. You

have no reason to distrust your taste, or to submit the trial of it to me. You understand the use and the force of language as well as any man. You have quick feelings, and you are fond of poetry. How is it possible then that you should not be a judge of it? I venture to hazard only one alteration, which, as it appears to me, would amount to a little improvement. The seventh and eighth lines I think I should like better thus,—

Aspirante levi zephyro et redeunte serenâ
Anni temperie, fœcundo e cespite surgunt.

My reason is, that the word *cum* is repeated too soon. At least my ear does not like it; and when it can be done without injury to the sense, there seems to me to be an elegance in diversifying the expression, as much as possible, upon similar occasions. It discovers a command of phrase, and gives a more masterly air to the piece. If *extincta* stood unconnected with *telis*, I should prefer your word *micant* to the doctor's *vigent*. But the latter seems to stand more in direct opposition to that sort of extinction, which is effected by a shaft or arrow. In the day-time the stars may be said to die, and in the night to recover their strength. Perhaps the Doctor had in his eye that noble line of Gray,— "*Hyperion's march they spy, and glitt'ring shafts of war!*" But it is a beautiful composition. It is tender, touching, and elegant. It is not easy to do it justice in English.

Many thanks for the books, which, being most

admirably packed, came safe. They will furnish us with many a winter evening's amusement. We are glad that you intend to be the carrier back.

We rejoice too that your cousin has remembered you in her will. The money she left to those who attended her hearse would have been better bestowed upon you; and by this time perhaps she thinks so. Alas! what an enquiry does that thought suggest, and how impossible to make it to any purpose! What are the employments of the departed spirit? and where does it subsist? Has it any cognizance of earthly things? Is it transported to an immeasureable distance; or is it still, though imperceptible to us, conversant with the same scene, and interested in what passes here? How little we know of a state to which we are all destined; and how does the obscurity, that hangs over that undiscovered country, increase the anxiety we sometimes feel as we are journeying towards it! It is sufficient however for such as you, and a few more of my acquaintance, to know that in your separate state you will be happy. Provision is made for your reception, and you will have no cause to regret aught that you have left behind.—*Apropos de ça,*

I have written to Mr. Smith. My letter went this morning. How I love and honour that man! For many reasons I dare not tell him how much. But I hate the frigidity of the style, in which I am forced to address him. That line of Horace—"*Dii tibi divitias dederunt artemque fruendi*"—was never half so applicable to the poet's friend, as to Mr. Smith. My

bosom burns to immortalize him. But prudence says "Forbear!" and, though a poet, I pay respect to her injunctions.

I sincerely give you joy of the good you have unconsciously done by your example and conversation. That you seem to yourself not to deserve the acknowledgement your friend makes of it, is a proof that you do. Grace is blind to its own beauty; whereas such virtues as man may reach without it, are remarkable self-admirers. May you make such impressions upon many of your order! I know none that need them more.

You do not want my praises of your conduct towards Mr. ——. It is well for him however, and still better for yourself, that you are capable of such a part. It was said of some good man, (my memory does not serve me with his name,) "do him an ill turn and you make him your friend for ever." But it is Christianity only that forms such friends. I wish his father may be duly affected by this instance and proof of your superiority to those ideas of you which he has so unreasonably harboured. He is not in my favour now, nor will be upon any other terms.

I laughed at the comments you make on your own feelings, when the subject of them was a newspaper eulogium. But it was a laugh of pleasure and approbation: such indeed is the heart, and so is it made up. There are few that can do good, and keep their own secret, none perhaps without a struggle. Yourself, and your friend Smith, are no very common instances of the fortitude that is necessary in such a conflict. In

former days, I have felt my heart beat, and every vein throb, upon such an occasion. To publish my own good deed was wrong. I knew it to be so. But to conceal it seemed like a voluntary injury to myself. Sometimes I could, and sometimes I could not succeed. My occasions for such conflicts indeed were not very numerous.

Yours,

W. C.

Thanks for the sturgeon.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 25, 1784.

THIS contention about East Indian patronage seems not unlikely to avenge upon us, by its consequences, the mischiefs we have done there. The matter in dispute is too precious to be relinquished by either party; and each is jealous of the influence the other would derive from the possession of it. In a country whose politics have so long rolled upon the wheels of corruption, an affair of such value must prove a weight in either scale absolutely destructive of the very idea of a balance. Every man has his sentiments upon this subject, and I have mine. Were I constituted umpire of this strife, with full powers to decide it, I would tie a talent of lead about the neck of this patronage, and plunge it into the depths of the sea. To speak less figuratively, I would abandon all territorial interest in

a country to which we can have no right, and which we cannot govern with any security to the happiness of the inhabitants, or without the danger of incurring either perpetual broils, or the most insupportable tyranny at home:—that sort of tyranny, I mean, which flatters and tantalizes the subject with a show of freedom, and in reality allows him nothing more; bribing to the right and left, rich enough to afford the purchase of a thousand consciences, and consequently strong enough, if it happen to meet with an incorruptible one, to render all the efforts of that man, or of twenty such men, if they could be found, romantic, and of no effect. I am the king's most loyal subject, and most obedient humble servant. But by his majesty's leave, I must acknowledge I am not altogether convinced of the rectitude even of his own measures, or the simplicity of his views; and if I were satisfied that he himself is to be trusted, it is nevertheless palpable, that he cannot answer for his successors. At the same time he is my king, and I reverence him as such. I account his prerogative sacred, and shall never wish prosperity to a party that invades it, and that under the pretence of patriotism would annihilate all the consequence of a character essential to the very being of the constitution. For these reasons I am sorry that we have any dominion in the East,—that we have any such emoluments to contend about. Their immense value will probably prolong the dispute, and such struggles having been already made in the conduct of it, as have shaken our very foundations, it seems not unreasonable to suppose that still greater

efforts and more fatal, are behind; and after all, the decision in favour of either side may be ruinous to the whole. In the mean time, that the Company themselves are but indifferently qualified for the kingship, is most deplorably evident. What shall I say therefore? I distrust the court, I suspect the patriots, I put the Company entirely aside, as having forfeited all claim to confidence in such a business, and see no remedy of course, but in the annihilation, if that could be accomplished, of the very existence of our authority in the East Indies.

Unwin has lost a cousin, and found a thousand pound. She died worth sixty thousand; but left most of her fortune to poor relations, some of whom she has probably ruined by her kindness. Accept our best love to yourself and household. Mary Bell is dead and buried. The small-pox is in Dog Lane: no other news.

Yours, my dear friend,
most truly,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 1784.

I AM glad that you have finished a work, of which I well remember the beginning, and which I was sorry you thought it expedient to discontinue. Your reason for not proceeding was however such as I was obliged to acquiesce in, being suggested by a jealousy you felt, "lest your spirit should be betrayed into acrimony, in writing upon such a subject." I doubt not you have

sufficiently guarded that point; and indeed, at the time, I could not discover that you had failed in it. I have busied myself this morning in contriving a Greek title, and in seeking a motto. The motto you mention is certainly apposite. But I think it an objection, that it has been so much in use; almost every writer, that has claimed a liberty to think for himself upon whatever subject, having chosen it. I therefore send you one, which I never saw in that shape yet, and which appears to me equally apt and proper. The Greek word, δεσμος, which signifies literally a shackle, may figuratively serve to express those chains which bigotry and prejudice cast upon the mind. It seems, therefore, to speak like a lawyer, no misnomer of your book, to call it,

Μισοδεσμος.

The following pleases me most of all the mottoes I have thought of. But with respect both to that and the title you will use your pleasure.

Querelis
Haud justis assurgis, et irrita jurgia jactas.
Æn. x. 94.

From the little I have seen, and the much I have heard of the manager of the Review you mention, I cannot feel even the smallest push of a desire to serve him in the capacity of poet. Indeed I dislike him so much, that, had I a drawer full of pieces fit for his purpose, I hardly think I should contribute to his collection. It is possible too, that I may live to be once more a publisher myself; in which case, I should

be glad to find myself in possession of any such original pieces, as might decently make their appearance in a volume of my own. At present however I have nothing that would be of use to him; nor have I many opportunities of composing, Sunday being the only day in the week which we spend alone.

I am at this moment pinched for time, but was desirous of proving to you, with what alacrity my Greek and Latin memory are always ready to obey you, and therefore by the first post have to the best of my ability complied with your request.

Believe me, my dear friend,
Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 10, 1784.

THE morning is my writing time, and in the morning I have no spirits. So much the worse for my correspondents. Sleep, that refreshes my body, seems to cripple me in every other respect. As the evening approaches, I grow more alert, and when I am retiring to bed, am more fit for mental occupation than at any other time. So it fares with us whom they call nervous. By a strange inversion of the animal economy, we are ready to sleep when we have most need to be awake, and go to bed just when we might sit up to some purpose. The watch is irregularly wound up, it goes in the night when it is not wanted, and in the day stands still. In many respects we have the advantage

of our forefathers the Picts. We sleep in a whole skin, and are not obliged to submit to the painful operation of puncturing ourselves from head to foot, in order that we may be decently dressed, and fit to appear abroad. But on the other hand, we have reason enough to envy them their tone of nerves, and that flow of spirits which effectually secured them from all uncomfortable impressions of a gloomy atmosphere, and from every shade of melancholy from every other cause. They understood, I suppose, the use of vulnerary herbs, having frequent occasion for some skill in surgery; but physicians, I presume they had none, having no need of any. Is it possible, that a creature like myself can be descended from such progenitors, in whom there appears not a single trace of family resemblance? What an alteration have a few ages made! They, without clothing, would defy the severest season; and I, with all the accommodations that art has since invented, am hardly secure even in the mildest. If the wind blows upon me when my pores are open, I catch cold. A cough is the consequence. I suppose if such a disorder could have seized a Pict, his friends would have concluded that a bone had stuck in his throat, and that he was in some danger of choking. They would perhaps have addressed themselves to the cure of his cough by thrusting their fingers into his gullet, which would only have exasperated the case. But they would never have thought of administering laudanum, my only remedy. For this difference however that has obtained between me and my ancestors, I am indebted to the luxurious practices, and enfee-

bling self-indulgence, of a long line of grandsires, who from generation to generation have been employed in deteriorating the breed, till at last the collected effects of all their follies have centred in my puny self,—a man indeed, but not in the image of those that went before me;—a man, who sighs and groans, who wears out life in dejection and oppression of spirits, and who never thinks of the aborigines of the country to which he belongs, without wishing that he had been born among them. The evil is without a remedy, unless the ages that are passed could be recalled, my whole pedigree be permitted to live again, and being properly admonished to beware of enervating sloth and refinement, would preserve their hardiness of nature unimpaired, and transmit the desirable quality to their posterity. I once saw Adam in a dream. We sometimes say of a picture, that we doubt not its likeness to the original, though we never saw him; a judgement we have some reason to form, when the face is strongly charactered, and the features full of expression. So I think of my visionary Adam, and for a similar reason. His figure was awkward indeed in the extreme. It was evident that he had never been taught by a Frenchman to hold his head erect, or to turn out his toes; to dispose gracefully of his arms, or to simper without a meaning. But if Mr. Bacon was called upon to produce a statue of Hercules, he need not wish for a juster pattern. He stood like a rock; the size of his limbs, the prominence of his muscles, and the height of his stature, all conspired to bespeak him a creature whose strength had suffered no diminution;

and who, being the first of his race, did not come into the world under a necessity of sustaining a load of infirmities, derived to him from the intemperance of others. He was as much stouter than a Pict, as I suppose a Pict to have been than I. Upon my hypothesis, therefore, there has been a gradual declension, in point of bodily vigour, from Adam down to me: at least if my dream were a just representation of that gentleman, and deserve the credit I cannot help giving it, such must have been the case.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 22, 1784.

I CONGRATULATE you on the thaw; I suppose it is an universal blessing, and probably felt all over Europe. I myself am the better for it, who wanted nothing that might make the frost supportable; what reason therefore have they to rejoice, who, being in want of all things, were exposed to its utmost rigour! The ice in my ink, however, is not yet dissolved. It was long before the frost seized it, but at last it prevailed. The Sofa has consequently received little or no addition since. It consists at present of four books and a part of a fifth; when the sixth is finished, the work is accomplished, but if I may judge by my present inability, that period is at a considerable distance.

I owe you thanks for your kind remembrance of me in your letter sent me on occasion of your departure,

and as many for that which I received last night. I should have answered, had I known where a line or two from me might find you; but, uncertain whether you were at home or abroad, my diligence, I confess, wanted the necessary spur.

It makes a capital figure among the comforts we enjoyed during the long severity of the season, that the same *incognito* to all except ourselves, made us his almoners this year likewise, as he did the last, and to the same amount. Some we have been enabled, I suppose, to save from perishing, and certainly many from the most pinching necessity.

Are you not afraid, Tory as you are, to avow your principles to me, who am a Whig? Know that I am in the opposition; that though I pity the King, I do not wish him success in the present contest. But this is too long a battle to fight upon paper. Make haste, that we may decide it face to face.

Our respects wait upon Mrs. Bull, and our love upon the young Hebræan. I wish you joy of his proficiency, and am glad that you can say, with the old man in Terence,—

> omnes omnia
> Bona dicere, et laudare fortunas meas,
> Qui gnatum haberem tali ingenio præditum.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, February, 1784.

I GIVE you joy of a thaw, that has put an end to a frost of nine weeks continuance with very little interruption; the longest that has happened since the year 1739. May I presume that you feel yourself indebted to me for intelligence, which perhaps no other of your correspondents will vouchsafe to communicate, though they are as well apprized of it, and as much convinced of the truth of it, as myself? It is, I suppose, every where felt as a blessing, but no where more sensibly than at Olney; though even at Olney the severity of it has been alleviated in behalf of many. The same benefactor, who befriended them last year, has with equal liberality administered a supply to their necessities in the present. Like the subterraneous flue that warms my myrtles, he does good, and is unseen. His injunctions of secrecy are still as rigorous as ever, and must therefore be observed with the same attention. He, however, is a happy man, whose philanthropy is not like mine, an impotent principle, spending itself in fruitless wishes. At the same time, I confess it is a consolation, and I feel it an honour, to be employed as the conductor, and to be trusted as the dispenser of another man's bounty. Some have been saved from perishing, and all, that could partake of it, from the most pitiable distress.

I will not apologize for my politics, or suspect them of error, merely because they are taken up from the newspapers. I take it for granted, that those reporters of the wisdom of our representatives are tolerably cor-

rect and faithful. Were they not, and were they guilty of frequent and gross misrepresentation, assuredly they would be chastised by the rod of parliamentary criticism. Could I be present at the debates, I should indeed have a better opinion of my documents. But if the House of Commons be the best school of British politics, which I think an undeniable assertion, then he that reads what passes there has opportunities of information, inferior only to theirs who hear for themselves, and can be present upon the spot. Thus qualified, I take courage; and when a certain reverend neighbour of ours curls his nose at me, and holds my opinions cheap, merely because he has passed through London, in his way to Wiltshire, I am not altogether convinced that he has reason on his side. I do not know that the air of the metropolis has a power to brighten the intellects, or that to sleep a night in the great city is a necessary cause of wisdom. He tells me that Mr. Fox is a rascal, and that Lord North is a villain, that every creature execrates them both, and that I ought to do so too. But I beg to be excused. Villain and rascal are appellations which we, who do not converse with great men, are rather sparing in the use of. Neither can I persuade myself that because one of them has frequented the gaming table, and the other, after having been at the head of the court party, has associated with him, they are therefore traitors to their country, and fit only to be hanged. I can conceive them both to be most entirely persuaded of the rectitude of their conduct; and the rather, because I feel myself much inclined to believe that, being so, they are not mis-

taken. I cannot think that secret influence is a bugbear, a phantom conjured up to serve a purpose; the mere *shibboleth* of a party. Stuartism, in my mind, has been the characteristic of the present reign; and being, and having always been somewhat of an enthusiast on the subject of British liberty, I am not able to withhold my reverence and good wishes from the man, whoever he be, that exerts himself in a constitutional way to oppose it. The son of Lord Chatham seems to me to have abandoned his father's principles. I admire neither his measures nor his temper; but very much admire the forbearance and lenity with which he is treated, and that consideration of his youth which men of equal ability, to say the least, and certainly of much greater experience, vouchsafe to show him. His obstinate continuance in office, with no better reason for it than an imaginary point of honour, is without example. It is *like* a young man either intoxicated with power, or implicitly, and at all hazards, executing the dictates of men more subtle and able than himself. I fear much that he is the tool of mischievous purposes, and that his unrelaxing steadiness, too much resembling that of a certain personage, will bring down a storm upon himself and upon the nation.

Caraccioli upon the subject of self-acquaintance was never, I believe, translated. I have sometimes thought that the Theological Miscellany might be glad of a chapter of it monthly. It is a work which I much admire. You, who are master of their plan, can tell me whether such a contribution would be welcome. If you think it would, I would be punctual in my

remittances; and a labour of that sort would suit me better in my present state of mind than original composition on religious subjects.

Remember us as those that love you, and are never unmindful of you.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 29, 1784.

We are glad that you have such a Lord Petre in your neighbourhood. He must be a man of a liberal turn, to employ a heretic in such a service. I wish you a further acquaintance with him, not doubting that the more he knows you he will find you the more agreeable. You despair of becoming a prebendary for want of certain rhythmical talents, which you suppose me possessed of. But what think you of a cardinal's hat? Perhaps his lordship may have interest at Rome, and that greater honour may await you. Seriously, however, I respect his character, and should not be sorry if there were many such Papists in the land.

Mr. Smith has given free scope to his generosity, and contributed as largely to the relief of Olney, as he did last year. Soon after I had given you notice of his first remittance, we received a second to the same amount, accompanied indeed with an intimation that we were to consider it as an anticipated supply, which, but for the uncommon severity of the present winter, he should have reserved for the next. The inference is, that next winter we are to expect nothing. But the

man and his beneficent turn of mind considered, there is some reason to suppose that, logical as the inference seems, it may yet be disappointed.

Adverting to your letter again, I perceive that you wish for my opinion of your answer to his lordship. Had I forgot to tell you that I approve of it, I know you well enough to be aware of the misinterpretation you would have put upon my silence. I am glad therefore that I happened to cast my eye upon your appeal to my opinion, before it was too late. A modest man, however able, has always some reason to distrust himself upon extraordinary occasions. Nothing is so apt to betray us into absurdity, as too great a dread of it; and the application of more strength than enough is sometimes as fatal as too little: but you have escaped very well, considering that you were addressing yourself to a lord, and that a lord is a creature you do not every day converse with. For my own part, when I write to a stranger, I feel myself deprived of half my intellects. I suspect that I shall write nonsense, and I do so. I tremble at the thought of an inaccuracy, and become absolutely ungrammatical. I feel myself sweat. I have recourse to the knife and the pounce. I correct half a dozen blunders, which in a common case I could not have committed, and have no sooner dispatched what I have written, than I recollect how much better I could have made it; how easily and genteelly I could have relaxed the stiffness of the phrase, and have cured the insufferable awkwardness of the whole, had they struck me a little earlier. Thus we stand in awe of we know not what, and miscarry through mere desire to excel.

I read Johnson's Prefaces every night, except when the newspaper calls me off. At a time like the present, what author can stand in competition with a newspaper? or who, that has a spark of patriotism, does not point all his attention to the present crisis? The consequences that I expect will follow our commotions are too terrible to be mentioned. They will proclaim *themselves* soon, if I have any skill in political speculation.

The sturgeon was excellent.

W. C.

I am so disgusted with ———, for allowing himself to be silent, when so loudly called upon to write to you, that I do not choose to express my feelings. Woe to the man whom kindness cannot soften!

END OF VOL. IV.

CHISWICK:
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